

Sex and Intimacy

Following Baby Loss

There is no right way to feel

Following the loss of your baby, your feelings about sex and intimacy may change.

You may want closeness and physical comfort, or you may not want to be touched at all. You may feel emotionally disconnected from your partner, worried about your body, or find that sex brings up difficult thoughts and feelings.

All these responses are valid.

Grief can affect intimacy in many ways, and there is **no right timeline for feeling ready again**.

Your body may need time to recover

Pregnancy and birth can affect your body, regardless of the circumstances surrounding your loss.

You may experience:

- Vaginal bleeding or physical discomfort
- Pain or tenderness following birth or surgery
- Changes to your pelvic floor
- Vaginal dryness
- Tiredness and exhaustion

- Changes in how you feel about your body
- Reduced or increased sexual desire

It is important to allow your body time to recover and to follow any advice given by your maternity or healthcare team.

Intimacy does not have to mean sex

Being close to someone can take many different forms.

You might find comfort in:

- Holding hands
- Cuddling
- Sitting together
- A hug
- A gentle massage
- Talking openly
- Spending quiet time together

You can take intimacy at your own pace. There is no expectation to return to sex before you feel physically and emotionally ready.

Your partner may feel differently

Grief can affect people in different ways.

One person may want more closeness, while another may need more space. This does not mean that either of you is grieving incorrectly or that you care about your baby any differently.

Where possible, try to talk openly about what feels comfortable and what you need from each other.

It can be helpful to say:

“I want to feel close to you, but I am not ready for sex yet.”

or

“I don't know how I feel at the moment, but I would like us to take things slowly.”

If you decide to have sex

Take things slowly and communicate with each other.

Stop if something feels painful or uncomfortable. You do not need to continue simply because you have started.

Using lubrication may help if you are experiencing vaginal dryness or discomfort.

If sex continues to be painful or difficult, speak to your GP or a pelvic health physiotherapist for advice and support.

Thinking about contraception and future pregnancy

It can be helpful to think about contraception before you feel ready to have sex again, particularly if you do not want to become pregnant straight away.

Feelings about another pregnancy can also be complicated following loss. You may feel ready quickly, unsure, frightened, or not want to think about pregnancy at all.

There is no right answer. Your GP, midwife or healthcare team can offer advice about contraception and future pregnancies.

Be kind to yourself

Your relationship with intimacy may change following loss, temporarily or for longer.

Try not to put pressure on yourself or your partner.

Consent, communication and emotional safety are important. You can change your mind at any time.

Give yourself permission to take things slowly and to discover what feels right for you.

When to seek support

Speak to your GP, healthcare professional or pelvic health physiotherapist if you are experiencing ongoing pain, physical symptoms, or difficulties with intimacy that are causing you concern.

You may also benefit from emotional or relationship support if grief is making it difficult to communicate or feel connected.

There is support available, and you do not have to navigate these changes alone.