

Taking Care of You

Disclaimer: It is our goal to use gender inclusive language when possible. Please know that all references to breastfeeding are inclusive of all breastfeeding, nursing, chestfeeding, and human milk feeding individuals.



Grieving for your baby is a unique and complex experience that we are here to support you through. When you are ready, here are some ideas that may be helpful for you and your family.

Coping/Grief Support

There is no timeline or "right way" to experience grief, and it is ok not to be ok. Everyone will experience the emotional and physical impacts in different ways and at different times. All your emotions are valid.

- You may feel overwhelmed by emotions one day and not the next. Feelings of denial, anger, guilt, depression and loneliness may come and go in no specific order or pattern.
- You may still be experiencing shifts in your hormones caused by pregnancy and birth. These hormones may impact your emotions, making it even more challenging to navigate your grief.
- Many people experience changes in their sleeping patterns after loss. You may feel exhausted and sleep more throughout the day, or racing thoughts may keep you awake. If sleep feels difficult at the moment, even 4 hours of uninterrupted sleep may improve your mental well being.
- You may already have supportive friends and family, but they might not fully understand what you are going through. The following resources may help you during the healing process.
 - Visit [PSI Arizona](#) for free grief support groups for you, your partner and/or family.
 - Visit [MISS Foundation](#) for one-on-one support services and free peer support groups.

Nutrition

Loss and grief can affect our eating habits. Be compassionate with yourself and honor how you are feeling.

- Some parents may feel like eating more comfort foods during this difficult time or some may experience a loss of appetite. You may find you have more energy when you eat consistently throughout the day.
- Choose foods from each food group (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein, dairy) that you enjoy. Visit [MyPlate](#) and [AZ Health Zone](#) for new recipes and ideas.
- Stretch your food dollars. You may be eligible for other nutrition assistance programs, which can be used at the same time as your WIC benefits. Visit [Arizona Department of Economic Security](#) to learn more and apply.
- Consuming a supplement with folic acid is important to take before, during and after a pregnancy to prevent birth defects if/when you become pregnant again. To receive your free supplement, visit the [Power Me A2Z website](#).

If you need immediate support call or text the Maternal Mental Health Hotline at 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262) or call your Healthcare Provider.

Lactation

The body begins to produce milk in the early stages of pregnancy. Depending on your stage of pregnancy or postpartum, you may have breast milk available. What you do with your milk is your choice, and we are here to support you.

- Some parents may want to wean quickly, slowly, or continue lactating in order to donate their milk.
- Available breastmilk may be a difficult reminder of your loss. When your body stops producing milk, changes in hormones may temporarily increase feelings of sadness, anxiety, and irritability. If these feelings continue, reach out to your Healthcare Provider.
- Human milk is the optimal way to feed babies. Some parents find it comforting to know that their milk is being used to save the life of another baby, and choose to donate to milk banks. Many milk banks do not have a minimum donation requirement
 - For more information on Milk Banks visit [Human Milk Banking Association of North America \(HMBANA\)](#).
 - There are two Milk Depot Donation sites in Arizona: [The Milk Spot of Phoenix](#) and [Tucson Medical Center for Women](#).
- This handout provides more information about caring for your breasts [after a loss](#). You can also call the 24-Hour Breastfeeding Hotline 1-800-833-4642 to speak to a IBCLC.

Family Planning

Making the decision to try again for a baby after a loss is a personal one. It is recommended to allow yourself time to heal physically and emotionally.

- When you feel ready, you can discuss family planning with your Healthcare Provider for advice and support.
- If birth control is part of your plan, oral contraceptives are now available without a prescription from many pharmacies.
- For some women, hormonal birth control may impact their mood. If you notice any changes, speak to your provider about other options.
- At future appointments bring a list of questions to make sure your concerns are addressed. If you feel unsupported by your provider, you have the option to switch. Advocate for yourself and your family.

Family Life

If you have other children here are some additional resources that you may find helpful.

- Vaccines keep you and your family healthy. Financial support may be available through the [Vaccines for Children program](#).
- [Head Start and Early Head Start](#) offer no-cost early education programs for eligible children ages 0-5. Visit the [DES website](#) for help with other childcare costs.
- [Strong Families AZ](#) offers classes and resources for first-time mothers, fathers, and families with young children ages zero to five.
- If you are feeling unsafe in your relationship or at home, visit the [ACESDV website](#) for compassionate information and support regarding domestic or sexual violence.

More to Consider

To help your family stay safe, avoid using alcohol, tobacco, and illicit substances, and take your medications as prescribed.

- For Substance Abuse Treatment and Resources
 - Visit the [Arizona Treatment Locator](#)
 - Arizona Opioid Assistance and Referral Line 1-888-688-4222
 - SAMHSA Helpline 1-800-662-4357
- Thinking about quitting smoking or vaping? Call the ASHLINE at 1-800-556-6222



Postpartum Support International
Arizona Chapter

