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Navigating the Festive Season After Miscarriage



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Traditionally, the Christmas season is a time for celebration, for catching up with friends, spending time with family, engaging in religious tradition and reflecting on the year that was.

Our calendars fill up with invitations to work events and social functions, while our social media feeds fill up with pictures of children on Santa's knee. And there is generally always a Christmas Day lunch or dinner to attend.

Yet, for those of us who have lost a longed-for pregnancy through miscarriage or medically recommended termination, or anyone desperately trying to fall pregnant without success, the Christmas season can be incredibly challenging and fraught with emotion.

The thought of having to plaster a smile on your face and take part in the celebrations may be filling you with anxiety and dread. The sadness you're feeling at not being pregnant anymore or not celebrating your baby's first Christmas as you'd planned might be completely overwhelming you.



However you may be feeling, we hope that the following suggestions might help you to manage the upcoming festive season in a way that feels authentic and nurturing for you.

Plan ahead. Decide who, if anyone, you'd like to spend time with over the Christmas break. Try to be with people who will lift your spirits and listen to you rather than cause you even more stress and upset.

Say 'No'. If you think a particular occasion is going to cause more stress than enjoyment, it is absolutely OK to politely decline the invitation. If it's a family gathering you're declining, perhaps explain that you and your partner would like to spend the day together and you will see everyone another time.

Plan your 'out'. If attending an event is unavoidable, locate a quiet place where you can step away if need be. Another option is to pre-plan an excuse in advance as to why you will need to leave early.

Be kind to yourself. Christmas can be stressful at the best of times, but now more than ever, you need to be gentle with yourself. Don't do more than you feel you can. Treat yourself - have a massage, eat your favourite food, buy a new book, hang out with your bestie but also make sure to take some time out for you.

Reconnect with your partner. Miscarriage (and infertility) can take its toll on a relationship. Book in some time to reconnect, go on a date, do something you used to enjoy doing together. Nurture each other and remind yourselves of the closeness you share.

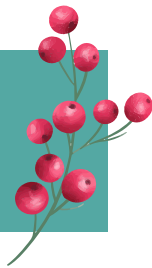
Unplug. If you are going through an emotional time, it's a good idea to take a break from social media as a means of self-preservation. Even better, if you are able to get away for a couple of days with your partner, then take the chance to do so.

Include your baby. We often talk about marking the loss of a pregnancy/baby and Christmas is no different. Buy a special bauble for the tree, hang a stocking or even light a candle in memory of them.

Reach out for support. Join an online group and talk with others who understand how you're feeling. Knowing you're not alone can be very reassuring. If you need something more, an appointment with a counsellor or a phone call with one of our Peer Support Ambassadors may be helpful.

Pay it Forward. Some people find that doing something kind for someone else can bring comfort. Perhaps you could volunteer to serve meals to the homeless, deliver presents to the disadvantaged or donate a gift in memory of your unborn child.

*Remember, it's also ok to enjoy yourself.
It doesn't mean you're not being mindful of the baby you've lost.
And it may be just what you need.*



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And what about the New Year?

It can seem futile to even dare to dream that next year things may be different. After all, we know all too well that plans can and do change. However, we can also tend to put our lives on hold weighing up all the 'what ifs?'

So perhaps as a special gift to yourself, think about something you can take into the new year that is just for you. What is something you've always wanted to do? A hobby. Study. A bucket-list item. Something that will bring you empowerment and a sense of contentment.

And lastly, if you think you can, try to allow yourself some space to hope.



You can find more downloadable resources on our website
pinklephants.org.au