

The Miscarriage Association



Acknowledging Pregnancy Loss

We are sorry that you have had a miscarriage

This leaflet has been prepared specially for a wide range of D/deaf people.

We use clear plain English on the left hand page.

There is more detail on the right hand page.

We hope you will find this new style of leaflet helpful.

Let us know what you think.

About this leaflet

A miscarriage can be very upsetting.

Some people have mixed feelings.

It's not the same for everyone.

Your feelings

I feel very upset and depressed. Is this normal?

Yes. Lots of people feel like this.

Some people feel sad for a long time.

Some people feel better quickly.

Some people are OK at first but get upset later.

Some women are jealous of pregnant women and women with babies.

You might feel sad sometimes when you remember your baby.

You might be upset on the baby's "birthday" (when the baby should have been born).

Talking to people might help.

About this leaflet

A miscarriage can be very upsetting. You were expecting a baby and you now will have to cope with all sorts of feelings about losing your baby.

Changes inside your body can also affect the way you are feeling.

This leaflet has been written mostly by women who have been through miscarriage themselves. We hope that it will answer some of your questions.

Your feelings

I feel very upset and depressed. Is this normal?

When you started to miscarry, you probably felt frightened and helpless. There is usually nothing you can do to prevent it happening.

Some women recover quickly, others take a long time. Some cope well at the time, but feel extremely sad or depressed later on. This is all normal.

Don't expect too much of yourself. You may never forget the baby you have lost, but the pain will get easier with time.

Many women find it hard to cope with their feelings. Some women find it difficult to talk about how they feel.

Not everyone has the same feelings. Here are some examples:

Shock

Anger

Feeling empty

Sense of bereavement (loss)

Sadness and crying

Sleeping problems

Not interested in everyday life

Difficult to concentrate

Constant tiredness

Feelings of guilt and failure

No interest in sex

Isolation and loneliness

Talking about it all the time, or finding it too painful to discuss

Pain or jealousy when you see pregnant women or babies

Many women find that these feelings happen after the miscarriage or they happen later on. You may feel sad or weepy on the date you were expecting your baby. Or on the anniversary of your miscarriage.

It may help to talk about your feelings with people you trust and with other women who have had miscarriages.

The Miscarriage Association is always happy to give support to anyone who needs it.

Others people's reactions

Your husband or partner*

He might feel upset too.

He might find it hard to show his feelings.

He might not feel the same as you.

He might feel guilty.

He might not understand how you feel.

He might feel lonely.

He will probably want to be strong and help you.

He might spend more time at work.

Try to talk to each other.

If you don't have a partner

You might feel very lonely.

Try to get help from family or friends.

***(Your partner may be a man or a woman. We use the words 'he', 'him', 'his' just to make this leaflet easier to read).**

Children

Children often can tell that something is wrong.

If you tell your children, keep it simple.

Others people's reactions

Your husband or partner*

Your husband or partner is likely to feel upset because of what you have gone through. He may also be upset about the loss of your baby. The way he grieves may be different from you and he may find it hard to show his feelings.

He has not experienced the same physical and emotional changes caused by the pregnancy hormones. He may not therefore feel the same about the death of your baby. He may not have seen a scan or felt the baby move.

He might feel guilty and feel that this is his fault because he made you pregnant. Both of you may be feeling sad about not having your baby, but you may find it difficult to support each other.

He may wonder why you are not recovering quickly and why you are so upset. He may find it hard to understand why life is not "back to normal" and why you are taking a long time to "get better". Men often feel they can't help. They sometimes feel on their own, with no-one to talk to.

Your partner may want to "be strong" for you. He may not show his feelings. You may think he doesn't care. He may become busy with things and perhaps be more involved with his work.

It may help you both if you can talk to each other about your feelings. The Miscarriage Association leaflet *Men and Miscarriage* may be helpful.

Your partner might be unsympathetic about you and your baby, or you may not have a partner. This can leave you feeling unsupported and alone. It may help to find someone else to talk to.

***(Your partner may be a man or a woman. We use the words 'he', 'him', 'his' just to make this leaflet easier to read).**

Children

Children often notice when something is wrong. They will see when their parent is upset.

If you want to tell them what has happened keep it simple.

The Miscarriage Association has a leaflet *Talking to children about pregnancy loss*, that you might find helpful.

Grandparents and family

They may also feel sad.

Perhaps your parents are worried about you.

Your parents might not understand how you feel.

They may be angry and upset and blame you.

Some people don't want to talk about it. Why?

People often:

- want to cheer you up
- don't want to upset you
- tell you "it will be all right".

They may say things that upset you.

Talk to someone who understands how you feel.

Maybe talk to someone who has had a miscarriage herself.

Remembering your baby

You might want something to help you to remember your baby.

Ask your hospital:

- "Can we have a scan picture?"
- "Can we have photographs of the baby?" (if you were more than 15 weeks pregnant)

Grandparents and other relatives

Your parents (and your partner's parents too) may be sad at losing their grandchild.

At the same time they might be worried about you. They may say the wrong things. They might not be able to find the right words even though they care about you.

They also may find it hard to understand your feelings. They may even blame you, thinking that the miscarriage is somehow your fault. Show them this leaflet – it might help.

Some people don't want to talk about my miscarriage. Why?

Some people might find it very difficult to cope with. They might want to cheer you up, hoping you will get over the miscarriage quickly.

If they don't understand how you feel, they may say things which may hurt:

"You're young – you can always have another one".

"There was probably something wrong with it anyway".

"You shouldn't have gone to work, eaten that food, etc".

"It wasn't really a baby – just a blob".

"You shouldn't be thinking of having a baby anyway".

People find it difficult to say the right things (they don't mean to hurt you).

It will help if you can find someone to talk to who understands how you feel.

Remembering your baby

Many people want to do something to remember their baby. Sometimes they want help to say goodbye. You could find out what help your hospital offers.

Could we have a photo of the baby?

In an early miscarriage, you may be able to have a scan picture of your baby.

If you had a miscarriage after 15 weeks, the hospital may offer to take photographs of the baby. The staff will give the photographs to you. Sometimes they may keep them for you in case you want them later.

Staff may be able to take footprints of the baby for you to keep.

- “Can we find out if our baby is a boy or a girl?”
- “Can we have the vicar or our religious leader, to say a blessing?”
- “Do you have a Book of Remembrance?”
- “Do you have a Garden of Remembrance?”

You might want to:

- plant flowers in the garden
- give money to your favourite charity
- write a letter to your baby
- give your baby a name
- draw a picture or write a poem.

Do what you want – this will help you.

Your health

Your womb

- Sometimes the womb gets rid of everything.
- Sometimes it doesn't.
- The doctor might ask you to have a small operation.
- S/he might give you some pills instead.
- Sometimes you don't need to do anything.
- Make sure you have clear communication with the doctor.
- Ask for a sign language interpreter if you need one.

Could we know the sex of the baby?

It is not usually possible to find out. You can ask.

Some people decide to give their baby a name like Lee or Chris (suitable for both boys and girls)

Could we arrange to have a blessing said for our baby?

You may be able to arrange for the hospital chaplain (vicar or other person) to give a short service or say a prayer for your baby.

Some hospitals arrange regular services of remembrance – ask for information.

Is there anything else we can do?

Your hospital may have a Book of Remembrance where staff can enter your baby's details.

There may be a local Garden of Remembrance where you could arrange to have a personal memorial. You may like to plant flowers or a tree in memory of your baby, or give a donation to your favourite charity.

Some people find it comforting to write a letter or a poem to their baby to express their thoughts and feelings.

Do whatever feels right for you.

Your health

In some miscarriages the womb empties itself completely. Sometimes the womb does not empty itself properly. In some cases the baby dies but stays in the womb.

The doctor may suggest that you have a small operation to clear your womb. This is called a D and C, or ERPC. She/he might suggest that you have treatment with pills instead.

You may choose to let the miscarriage happen naturally. This might take some time.

Ask the doctor to explain each option. Ask for a sign language interpreter if you need one.

Will I bleed?

- Maybe for two weeks afterwards.
- You might have cramps (your stomach might hurt).
- Pain and blood will get less.

See your doctor if:

- your pain gets worse
- your bleeding gets worse
- the bleeding looks or smells bad
- you have a high temperature.

Remember

- Use pads not tampons.
 - No sex until after you stop bleeding.
-

Can I bath and shower?

- You can bath, shower and wash your hair.
 - Don't go swimming until after you stop bleeding.
-

When will I get my next period?

- Between four and six weeks after the miscarriage.
 - Your first period may be very heavy.
 - You can get pregnant again before your next period.
 - If you haven't had a period after six weeks and you have had sex, you might be pregnant. Maybe you will want to do a pregnancy test.
-

Is it safe to get pregnant quickly?

- Yes, unless the doctor tells you to wait.
- Some women wait until they have had one period.

How long will I bleed for?

After the miscarriage, you may bleed for up to two weeks.

You may have cramping pains too.

The bleeding and cramps should gradually become less painful.

Contact your doctor if:

- the bleeding or pain becomes worse
- the bleeding changes colour, or looks or smells bad
- you have a high temperature.

These may be signs of an infection.

It is better to use pads rather than tampons during this time.

Don't have sexual intercourse until the bleeding stops.

Am I allowed to bath and shower?

Yes, and to wash your hair.

It is best not to swim until any bleeding or discharge has stopped.

When will I get my next period?

You should get your next period between four and six weeks after the miscarriage.

Your period may be heavier than usual.

It is possible to become pregnant before your next period. If you haven't had your period after six weeks, and if you have had sex, perhaps do a pregnancy test.

Is it safe to get pregnant so soon?

Many doctors suggest waiting until you have had one period.

If you become pregnant before the first period, it does not mean you will have another miscarriage.

Your doctor might suggest you wait longer than this. Ask him/her if you are not sure.

When can we try again?

- When you feel ready
- When you feel better
- Take your time
- You don't have to try to get pregnant again quickly

If you had a late miscarriage (after 14 weeks pregnant)

- Your breasts may stay larger.
- They may leak milk for several days.
- This can be upsetting.
- Wear a bra with good support – this may help.
- If your breasts hurt, try Paracetamol.
- Or ask your GP or midwife for their advice.

Returning to normal

- Each person is different.
- Some people feel better quickly.
- Some people take longer.
- You may feel tired for 5 to 10 days.
- Take things easy till your energy comes back.
- If you are worried, talk to your GP.

What about housework or going back to work?

- Each person is different.
- It will depend on how you are feeling.
- If you go to work, you may find it difficult to face people.
- You might find it hard to concentrate on your work.
- Or you might feel better if you go to work.
- Your colleagues and friends may help you.
- Going to work every day and doing the same things may help.

So when is the best time to try again?

The best time to try again is when you and your partner feel ready, both physically and emotionally.

Some women feel that being pregnant helps them to get over their miscarriage. Others need time to grieve and to think.

Don't feel that you must rush into another pregnancy if you're not ready.

Are there other things I should know?

In a later miscarriage, your breasts may stay larger and may leak milk for several days. This can be very distressing.

A well-supporting bra may help.

If your breasts hurt, you could take a mild pain-killer such as Paracetamol.

You can ask your GP or midwife for their advice.

Returning to normal

Each person is different. Everyone recovers at their own pace.

You may feel low and tired for 5 to 10 days, so take things easy during this time.

You will gradually feel stronger, and you can then do whatever you usually do.

If you are worried, ask your GP or midwife for their advice

What about housework or going back to work?

This is different for each woman.

It might depend on how you are feeling physically and emotionally.

If you go to work, you may find it difficult to face people and find it hard to concentrate on your work.

On the other hand you may find it helps to go back to work and follow a routine.

You may find the support and sympathy of colleagues helps you too.

Causes of Miscarriage

Why did I miscarry?

- There are different reasons for miscarriage.
- The doctors may not be able to tell why you had your miscarriage.
- “Was it my fault?” Probably not.

When I started to bleed, I didn't stay in bed

- It probably made no difference.
- Once the miscarriage starts, very little or nothing can be done to stop it.

Did I miscarry because it was a boy (or girl)?

Probably not.

So why do miscarriages happen?

The main causes are:

Genetic:

Something goes wrong when the baby first starts to grow and it can't survive.

Hormonal:

Hormones are in every woman's body.

You need them to get pregnant and to help the baby grow.

If there is something wrong with the hormones, the baby won't grow properly.

Immunological:

Sometimes the woman's blood supply doesn't support the pregnancy.

That can cause miscarriage.

Causes of Miscarriage

Why did I miscarry? Was it something I did?

About one in four pregnancies end in miscarriage, but it is usually difficult to know exactly why.

It can be hard to accept if you don't know why it happened.

That doesn't mean that it is your fault. Don't blame yourself.

I didn't stay in bed when I started to bleed – should I have done?

No. If you miscarried in the first three or four months, then staying in bed would not have stopped you miscarrying.

Lying down can slow down bleeding, but it won't stop a pregnancy from miscarrying.

It is very sad but true that once miscarriage starts, very little can be done to stop it.

Did I miscarry because it was a boy (or girl)?

Probably not.

So why do miscarriages happen?

The main causes are:

Genetic: In about half of all early miscarriages, the baby does not develop well from the start and cannot survive.

Hormonal: Women with irregular periods may find it harder to conceive (get pregnant). If they get pregnant they are more likely to miscarry.

Immunological: Sometimes problems with blood-clotting mean the baby doesn't get enough oxygen. This can cause miscarriage.

Infection:

Coughs and colds are not harmful.

Some other illnesses (like German measles) may cause miscarriage.

Anatomical: (the body)

If the cervix (neck of the womb) is weak, it may start to open when the womb becomes heavier.

This may lead to miscarriage.

There might be other problems with the shape of the womb.

This may mean that there is not enough room for the baby to grow.

Ectopic Pregnancies

- The baby starts to grow in the wrong place.
- There is a separate leaflet about ectopic pregnancy.

Infection: Minor infections like coughs and colds are not harmful, but a very high temperature and some illnesses (or infections, such as German measles), may cause miscarriage.

Anatomical: If the cervix (neck of the womb) is weak, it may start to open as the uterus (womb) becomes heavier in later pregnancy. This may lead to miscarriage.

An irregular-shaped womb can mean that there is not enough room for the baby to grow. Large fibroids (growth of cells) may cause miscarriage in later pregnancy.

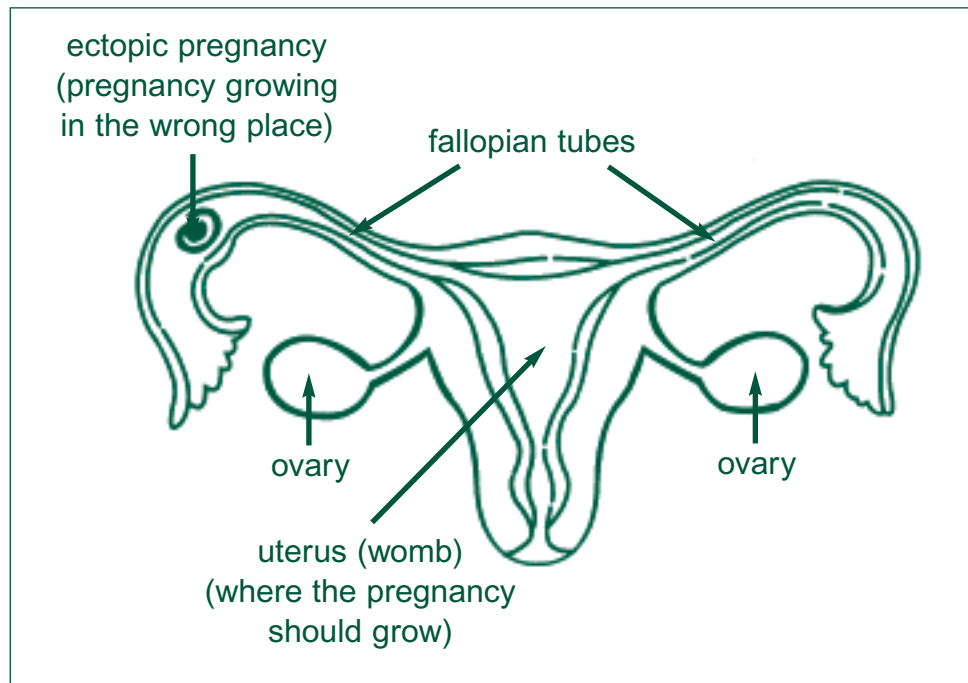
If you would like more information, you may find it helpful to read The Miscarriage Association leaflet “*Why did it happen to us?*”

Ectopic Pregnancies

Some pregnancies can be ectopic, which means “in the wrong place”.

The fertilised egg starts to grow in the wrong place, usually in one of the Fallopian tubes (they link the womb and the ovaries).

There is a separate leaflet available which explains ectopic pregnancy.



Molar pregnancies

This is rare.

- The womb gets ready for the baby.
- There is something wrong with the fertilised egg (the beginning of the baby).
- The Miscarriage Association has more information about molar pregnancy.

What happens next?

Will anyone see me after the miscarriage?

- The hospital may give you a follow-up appointment.
- You can talk to your GP or a health visitor.
- They can help if you want to talk about having another baby.

When should I start using contraception?

- As soon as you start having sex, you can become pregnant.
- If you don't want to get pregnant quickly, ask your GP about contraception as soon as possible.

If I get pregnant again, will I miscarry again?

It depends. Most women have a baby after one miscarriage.

Other women may have a baby after several miscarriages.

Is there anything I should do to prepare myself for another pregnancy?

- Take care of yourself.
- Eat well.
- Try not to smoke or drink much alcohol.
- Take folic acid if your doctor recommends it.

Molar pregnancy

A very few women have a 'molar pregnancy' which is rare. This can cause miscarriage.

The Miscarriage Association leaflet *Hydatidiform Mole* provides more information about this kind of pregnancy loss.

What happens next?

Will I be offered any follow-up treatment?

You may be offered a follow-up appointment at the hospital, or you can make an appointment with your GP or a health visitor.

Some health centres and GPs offer pre-pregnancy counselling for people who want to discuss future pregnancies.

If I want to wait before trying for another baby, when do I need to start using contraception?

You can ovulate (produce an egg) during the first weeks following your miscarriage, and you may become pregnant again.

Your doctor can give you information about contraception.

If I get pregnant again, will I miscarry again?

After one miscarriage, most women go on to have a normal pregnancy. Even if you have several miscarriages, you still have a good chance of having a baby.

Is there anything I should do to prepare myself for another pregnancy?

Take care of yourself with a healthy diet and regular exercise.

Try not to smoke or to drink much alcohol.

Doctors recommend you take folic acid supplements before trying for a baby and in early pregnancy. Ask the chemist for up-to-date information or look it up on the Internet.

You could read the Miscarriage Association leaflet *Preparing for another pregnancy*.

If I get pregnant I shall feel worried

- Many women feel like this.
- Think about who can help you.
- Think if you want a scan early (you don't have to).
- Try to share your feelings and worries with someone who understands.

Want to talk to someone?

There are people who can help:

- Contact The Miscarriage Association for help. Use your text phone service (Typetalk) or send an e-mail.
- Talk to your GP, or your midwife, or your Health Visitor. Make sure you have an interpreter if you need one.
- The website www.deafparent.org.uk will tell you how to find and pay for an interpreter or ask your Social Worker for advice.
- We want Deaf and hearing BSL volunteers in the future so do tell us if you can help other Deaf people.
- We will always try to help you and others.

If I get pregnant I shall feel worried and anxious about having another miscarriage

Many women feel like this. Think how you can get extra support with your next pregnancy.

Some people find it helpful to have an early scan, although others find this makes them more anxious.

Some find sharing their feelings and fears with someone else can help.

You might want to talk to your partner, a close friend or your GP.

You could contact a support volunteer from The Miscarriage Association; or go to a local support group. (You can talk to them about providing a sign language interpreter)

If you need to talk to someone

Having a miscarriage can be very upsetting, but you don't have to be alone or feel lonely. Talking to someone who understand about miscarriage can help.

You can telephone The Miscarriage Association via your text phone service (Typetalk) and talk to one of our helpline workers.

Or you can e-mail us. We usually reply the same day or the next day, except at weekends and Bank Holidays.

We may also be able to refer you to a helpful miscarriage support group in your area, where people can talk about their experiences and feelings. (The website www.deafparent.org.uk explains how to find and pay for an interpreter or ask your Social Worker for help)

We want to build up a list of deaf and hearing BSL volunteers (we do not have a list of BSL people yet).

Contact us if you want to talk to someone (a D/deaf person or a hearing BSL user).

Contact us if you feel you can help other people.

These two websites are for deaf parents

www.deafparent.org.uk (Deaf Parenting UK)

<http://www.codpuk.org.uk> (Children of Deaf Parents UK)

These websites are for people who have had a miscarriage:

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

www.babyloss.com

Finally

Having a miscarriage can be very upsetting.

You don't have to feel lonely.

There is help for you.

We hope reading this leaflet has helped.

Contact us if you want:

1. Write to us:

The Miscarriage Association
c/o Clayton Hospital
Northgate
Wakefield WF1 3JS

2. Telephone our Helpline (use Typetalk)

Tel: 01924 200799 (Text phone users, put 18001 first)
We are here Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Scottish helpline (answerphone): 0131 334 8883

3. Fax us on 01924 298834

4. E-mail us on info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk

5. Look at our website: www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

We have some more leaflets:

We can send them to you.

You can also read or print off these leaflets on our website.

But they have not been specially prepared for D/deaf people.

Talk to any of these professionals who will have experience of helping women who have had miscarriages.

- Community midwife
- Health visitor
- Liaison worker
- Community worker

Look at the websites on the opposite page.

Finally

Remember that you are not alone: many of the women you see every day will have had miscarriages themselves.

Some of them will want to help and support you at this difficult time. You might want to help other women in the future. We do hope that reading this leaflet has also helped a little.

The Miscarriage Association

c/o Clayton Hospital
Northgate
Wakefield WF1 3JS

Tel: 01924 200799 (Text phone users, start with 18001)

We are here Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Scottish helpline (answerphone): 0131 334 8883

Fax: 01924 298834

E-mail: info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Website: www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

If you would like written information

The Miscarriage Association has other leaflets that can tell you more about miscarriage, but they have not been prepared especially prepared for D/deaf people.

We can send them to you, or you can read or print them off from our website.

Why not join the Miscarriage Association?

"I found the Miscarriage Association very helpful. Thank you".

The Miscarriage Association gives support and information.

We also work with doctors, nurses and midwives.

We explain about miscarriage in magazines, newspapers and on TV.

If you join the Miscarriage Association

You will:

- help to support our work
- be part of a big group of people who have had miscarriages

You will receive:

- a newsletter every three months
- an information pack
- a booklist
- our Annual Report.

You can:

- come to the annual Members' Day and meet other people who have had miscarriages
- come to the AGM (Annual General Meeting) and vote.

It costs £20 each year if you are single or a couple.

It costs £5 each year if you are on benefits or unemployed.

If you can't afford £5, membership is free.

Perhaps you would like to join The Miscarriage Association

"I want to thank The Miscarriage Association for being there for me. The newsletters have been like a lifeline and I also go to the local support group."

The Miscarriage Association aims to provide information and support to anyone who is affected by miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or molar pregnancy.

We work with the press, radio and TV to provide more information about miscarriage. We also work with health professionals who care for patients who miscarry.

If you join The Miscarriage Association, you will help us to help other people who have had miscarriages. It may also help you feel less alone. Many of our members find it helpful and comforting to be part of a group of people with similar experiences.

In addition, you will receive:

- a year's subscription to our quarterly newsletter
- an free basic information pack
- a booklist
- an invitation to our annual Members' Day, where you can meet miscarriage experts and other people who have had miscarriages
- an invitation to the Annual General Meeting, where you can influence our policy
- a copy of our Annual Report.

Fees:	Individual or couple	£20 per year
	Unemployed or on benefits	£5 per year
	Unable to pay	Free

If you want to join, fill in the form opposite

Remember:

You pay £20 if you are single or a couple.

You pay £5 if you are on benefits or unemployed.

If you can't afford £5, membership is free.

Please send membership application form to:

The Miscarriage Association
c/o Clayton Hospital
Northgate
Wakefield
West Yorkshire WF1 3JS

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The money we receive from membership fees is very important to us. If you pay UK tax, you can make your membership fee worth 28% more. It won't cost you any extra. Just tick the **Gift Aid** box on the form.

Application for Membership

Date.....

**delete where applicable*

I/we* would like to join The Miscarriage Association¹

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

..... County:

Postcode: Tel:

I/we enclose a cheque/postal order* for £..... for membership fees for one year.

Or

I/we wish to pay my/our membership of £..... by Visa/Access/Mastercard*:

Card no: Expiry date: Issue No.

Fees:	Individual/couple (UK)	£20
	Individual/couple (UK), unwaged/on benefit	£5
	Individual/couple (abroad, incl. Eire)	£25
	M.A. Support Group (registration only)	Free
	M.A. Support Group (1-5 newsletters)	£22.50
	Other support groups and organisations	£30

Cheques and postal orders should be crossed **alc payee only** and made payable to The Miscarriage Association.

Please send me details about paying my membership by Banker's Order

giftaid it I would like my membership fee and any donation

I make to be considered as a **Gift Aid** donation

¹The Miscarriage Association is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. Should the company be wound up, I promise to pay the sum of £1 towards its debts if asked to do so.

Please send membership application form to:

The Miscarriage Association
c/o Clayton Hospital
Northgate
Wakefield
West Yorkshire WF1 3JS

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