

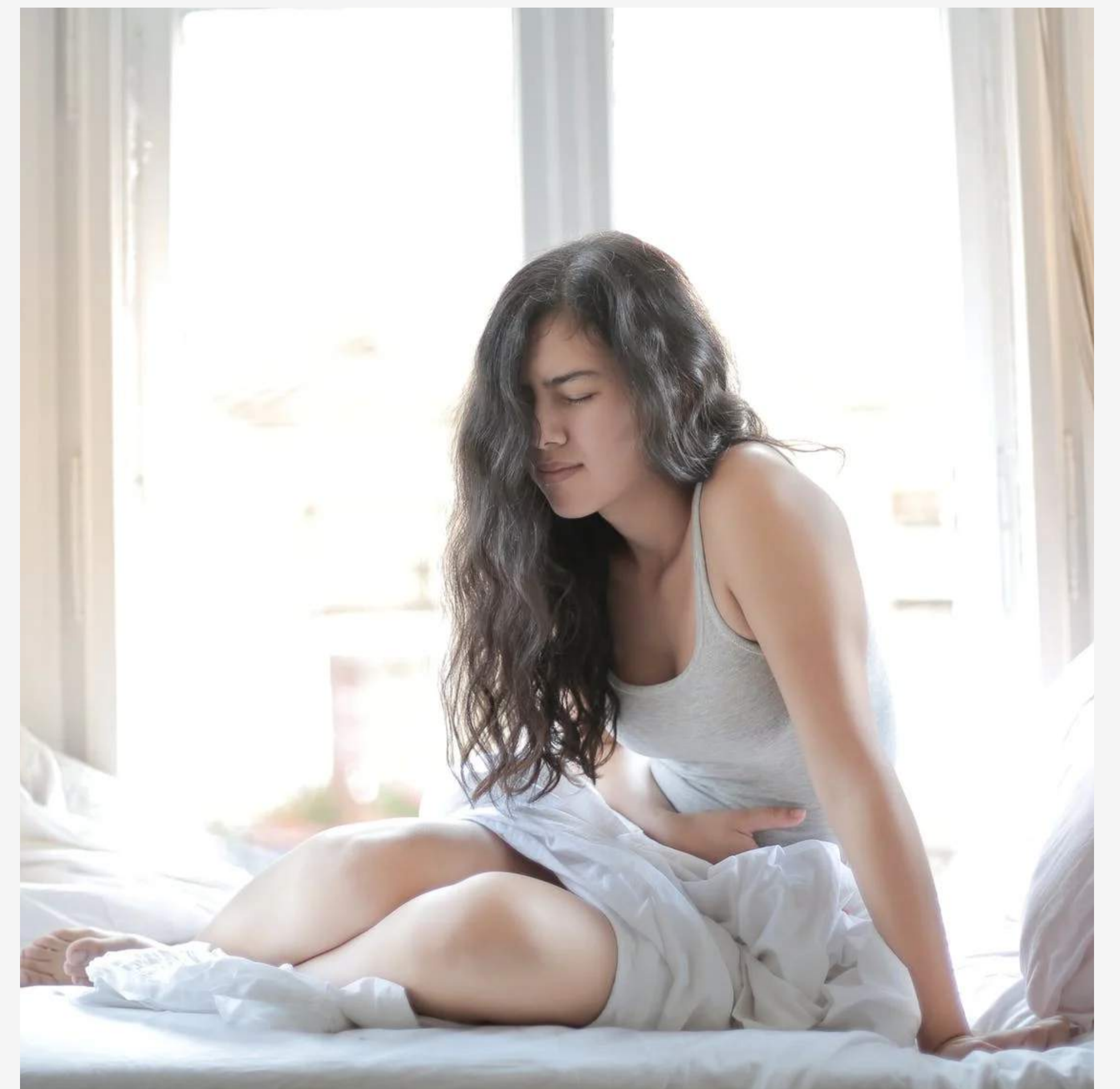


## CHECKLIST FOR SELF-CARE AFTER REPRODUCTIVE LOSS OR ABORTION

Many couples who have been through reproductive trauma worry that this unfortunate incident may happen again. Several treatments can improve the probability of a healthy pregnancy but it all starts from focusing on self-care for a healthy recovery from reproductive trauma. Emotional and physical healing is equally important to lead a healthy rest of your life.

## SELF-CARE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Directly go home from the hospital and take rest. Driving or handling heavy machinery is off-limits for one full day as you would have received pain medications for the procedure. You may resume normal activities from the next day but try to avoid any activity that may trigger pain.



Here is a quick checklist for self-care after reproductive trauma:

- **No Vaginal Penetration:** Your body needs to recuperate, which happens to be the top goal for aftercare. Any form of vaginal penetration can cause pain and infection. So, for two weeks, refrain from:
  - Sexual intercourse
  - Using tampons
  - Douching
- **Keep Period Pads Handy:** You are expected to have light bleeding or spotting for two weeks after the reproductive loss. It is recommended to use **cotton sanitary pads** as required. Normally, the menstrual period should start in four to eight weeks after the reproductive loss.
- **Showers Only:** Bathing in a tub and swimming pose a higher risk for infection. So, for two weeks, take showers only.
- **Rest As Required:** Don't rush to jump back to your routine, take a slow start and successively increase workload each day. You may return to your routine tasks as directed in the after-care instructions of your discharge summary.

## SEEK EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:

Don't Shy Away from seeking emotional support from your partner, family, and friends. However, since their knowledge on the subject of reproductive trauma will be limited, they might not be the ideal source of emotional support. It is highly recommended to join a support group and search for a good therapist to learn to cope with reproductive trauma.



A therapist who is experienced in grief may not be in pregnancy and infant loss. So searching for a good therapist can be a challenge. You might want to ask a trusted medical professional for a referral. Seeking help from a therapist can help you achieve three goals:

- **Lower your Negative Self-Talk and Manage Emotions:** A therapist will help you reduce self-blame by validating that your loss is genuine. He would provide you with a judgment-free and safe environment where you can express your feelings, vent, and grieve over your reproductive loss. Repairing narcissistic injuries and counteracting shame can be quite challenging.
- **Help Craft a New Narrative About your Reproductive Story:** He would help you understand that your loss was one of the chapters of your reproductive story, which is ongoing and evolving. He would be able to generate hope for you to have another go at trying for a baby or seek alternative ways to complete your family.
- **Help Redevelop Positive Relationship with Yourself after Reproductive Loss:** After going through such a traumatic event, you feel broken and your feeling towards yourself change. He would help you treat the event as a turning point after which your core assumptions about family and pregnancy change in a positive fashion. Post-traumatic growth can help you cope with reproductive loss and develop more grounded beliefs about life as a whole.

Joining a local peer-led support group can help you cope with grief. Even your therapist would recommend and encourage you to open up and seek support from others. Since these people would have more empathy towards your trauma and loss, you would be able to open up about your grief better. Listening to their reproductive losses and eventual successful childbirth stories can also generate hope and help you look forward.

## WHEN TO SEEK HELP, AND HOW:



Take some time to read after-care instructions offered by the hospital at the time of discharge for instructions on taking the prescribed medications. It will also help you differentiate between signs that show normal recovery, ones that need to be monitored, and symptoms that require immediate attention.

### Seek immediate medical attention from ER if:

- You have heavy vaginal bleeding that soaks more than 1 pad in an hour.
- Pus is coming from your vagina or there is foul-smelling discharge.
- There is severe abdominal pain.
- Your heart is beating faster than usual.
- You feel weak or dizzy.

### Call your Doctor or Healthcare Provider if:

- You are running a fever over 100.4°F or chills.
- You are unable to cope with extreme sadness and grief.
- You have concerns or questions about your condition or care.

**Note:** This information is for educational purposes only. It should not be treated as medical advice. Before following any medical regimen, always check with your doctor to ensure that it is safe for you.



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