

Miscarriage can increase suicide risk among teenagers

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Vulnerable teens who lose a pregnancy are at increased risk for suicide, new research from UO's Prevention Science Institute shows.

The study looks at [mental health](#) in [adolescent girls](#) who have been

involved with both the [juvenile justice system](#) and the foster care system. Researchers drew on a long-term dataset collected between 1997 and 2006, which tracked teens' outcomes after entering those systems.

In that population, pregnancy was linked to a higher risk of a suicide attempt, the researchers found. And miscarriage had a particularly strong effect: Teens who miscarried were twice as likely to attempt suicide compared to teens who didn't report having a miscarriage. Researchers didn't see a similar pattern among teens who had abortions. They published their findings in *Children and Youth Services Review*.

"Miscarriage can be a really isolating experience for anyone, but especially for people without a reliable support system in place," said Camille Cioffi, a research assistant professor at the Prevention Science Institute who led the study. "I think there are a lot of opportunities at different levels to provide support."

Even for teens who might not have a strong support system to raise a child and might not have initially planned to get pregnant, losing the baby can still be a traumatic event, she said.

The best solutions are those tailored to individuals, Cioffi emphasized. But in general, improving [mental health resources](#) following a [miscarriage](#) could help, as could educating parents and other caregivers on how to best support adolescents who experience pregnancy loss.

More information: Camille C. Cioffi et al, Pregnancy and miscarriage predict suicide attempts but not substance use among dual-systems involved female adolescents, *Children and Youth Services Review* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.chilyouth.2022.106494](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2022.106494)

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