

## Breast Cancer – Taking Control

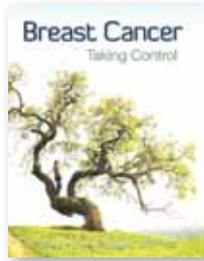
John Boyages

Australia: Boycare Publishing,  
2010

ISBN 978 0980 631 111, \$39.99

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in Australian women, with around 13 000 new diagnoses every year. Women commonly express a feeling of loss of control during the diagnosis and treatment phase of this illness. Professor Boyages' book seeks to help women regain a sense of control by highlighting what he has identified as 20 key control points. Examples include 'How do I find the right treatment team?', 'How do I cope with my family and friends?', 'What do the statistics really mean?' and 'Do I need chemotherapy?' For each control point an easy to follow summary flow diagram is provided, followed by more in depth information. At the end of each chapter the key points are highlighted and identified as warnings, tips or things to remember.

'Taking control' is written in the first person which helps to make it approachable, as do the



many illustrations and real life patient stories. Importantly, this book contains a wealth of practical information to help guide those women who choose to seek further information. Being written by an Australian, the advice and information is directly relevant to breast cancer treatment within the Australian healthcare setting.

This book will provide a useful supplement to the somewhat drier and less detailed booklets and guides that many women routinely receive from their treatment team after a diagnosis of breast cancer.

Guiding women through the diagnosis and treatment phase of breast cancer is a common experience for most GPs; GPs can confidently recommend this book to their newly diagnosed breast cancer patients. In addition, doctors themselves will likely find the book useful as an accessible way to top up their knowledge in this important area.

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## Pregnancy Loss

### Surviving miscarriage and stillbirth

Zoe Taylor

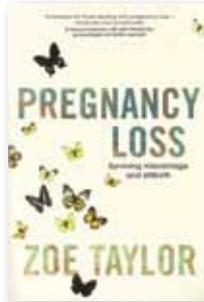
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Although this book's title did not immediately entice me to pick it up and start reading, once opened, I found myself turning the pages with great interest. Written by a journalist with medical reporting experience, this book is well researched and referenced. The author has also experienced multiple pregnancy losses and tackles the topic from a unique and empathic perspective.

This book is comprehensive in its approach to the issues around pregnancy loss, from explaining known medical facts with accuracy to giving personal accounts by women who have experienced loss at each stage of pregnancy. It manages to give both a factual and emotional account of the journey of pregnancy loss.

Because of its meticulously researched approach, this book is a useful resource for both the health professional and the nonhealth professional. The personal stories scattered throughout give enormous interest and help the reader connect to the material. Included are interviews from health professionals and



leading researchers around the world as well as references to published medical research, but 'readability' is maintained. The book highlights what is known on the subject and what is still being explored. While no book can answer every question about a subject, this one is an exceptionally informative read.

This book's appeal is enhanced by the amazing perspective it gives on the emotional aspects of pregnancy loss (and grief itself really). It gives a clear and candid account of what it is really like to lose a baby and goes a long way in helping people understand their responses and normalise their feelings. In this way, it is also a helpful resource for the friends and family of those experiencing loss, and suggests the most helpful ways for them to be supportive. It is a book that will help people cope both in the short and longer term and will answer their many varied and ongoing questions.

I would recommend this book to anyone requiring a greater understanding of the issues surrounding this very difficult subject, including those struggling to come to terms with a loss of their own. Many of the stories certainly struck a chord with me.

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early pregnancy loss. Intrauterine pregnancy (IUP). Gestational Trophoblast Disease. Pregnancy loss occurring before 20 completed weeks of gestation or less than 400 g birth weight. Ultrasound confirmed non-viable pregnancy with no bleeding. Refers to cases where a pregnancy test is positive but the pregnancy cannot be visualized by ultrasound.<sup>1</sup> Three or more consecutive miscarriages. There is no specific term for non-consecutive pregnancy losses. Pregnancy loss is the death of an embryo or fetus. It may include any of the following: Unintentional pregnancy loss: Miscarriage. Stillbirth. Blighted ovum. Toxic abortion. Pregnancy loss through intentional termination: Abortion or selective abortion. Hysterotomy abortion, an elective abortion of a non-viable fetus performed similar to a cesarean section. Late-term abortion. Self-induced abortion. Sex-selective abortion. Pregnancy loss is devastating, no matter when it happens or what the circumstances are. With time, however, comes healing. Allow yourself to mourn your pregnancy loss and accept what's happened and then look toward the future. Understand the grieving process. After a pregnancy loss, you might experience a range of emotions, including: Denial. At first, it might be impossible to grasp what's happened. You might find yourself in shock or disbelief. Guilt. Surviving a pregnancy loss can be very difficult. After a miscarriage, you may experience a roller coaster of emotions, as well as physical symptoms, as your body recovers after a miscarriage. It takes a few weeks to a month or more to recover physically after a miscarriage. Your recovery will depend on how far along you were into the pregnancy. Share. Pin. Pregnancy loss can occur even in previously healthy pregnancies. If it occurs before 20 weeks' of gestation (about 10% of pregnancies), it is called early pregnancy loss. Unknown (in some studies, more than half of all stillbirths were of unknown etiology). Environmental (exposure to toxins such as drugs or maternal smoking during pregnancy). References:<sup>[2]</sup><sup>[1]</sup><sup>[3]</sup>. Clinical features.