

Justine, a parent from Canada, shared her experience with vanishing twin syndrome following her pregnancy in September 2023. During her first ultrasound in the first trimester, she learned that there were two gestational sacs, but only one baby had developed with a healthy heartbeat. Because twins run in her family, seeing the two sacs initially filled her with excitement and hope. Her doctor suggested returning in a week to determine whether the second sac might develop later, raising the possibility that one baby had conceived at a different time. That week was marked by intense anxiety and hope as she prayed the second sac would develop. However, at the follow-up scan, the sac remained empty. The empty sac continued to appear on subsequent ultrasounds until around 12 weeks, when it disappeared completely.

Although she felt grateful and relieved that the surviving baby continued to grow and remain healthy, she also experienced ongoing sadness for the twin that could have been. She explained that even now, seeing or hearing about twins can be emotionally triggering. Throughout the pregnancy, her primary source of comfort was knowing that her surviving baby was healthy and progressing well.

Justine also reflected on the lack of support she received from healthcare professionals. She described the medical team as lacking empathy and noted that during the ultrasound confirming the second sac had not developed, the sonographer simply stated that “there’s no twin” without offering sympathy or acknowledgment of the loss. Following that appointment, neither her obstetrician nor doctor mentioned the twin again, which left her feeling that the loss was dismissed or considered unimportant. While she focused primarily on the surviving baby at the time, she now believes that healthcare providers need greater education and awareness regarding vanishing twin syndrome and the emotional impact it can have on families. As she expressed, it is still a loss, even when one baby survives. Her exact words are below:

*My first scan there were two sacs but only one baby was developed with a healthy heart beat. When I saw the two sacs I got so excited since twins run in my family. I was told to come back in a week to see if the other sac is developed. My doctor felt maybe one had a later conception date. That week was filled with anxiety and hope. I prayed and prayed for the other sac to develop. Unfortunately my next scan the sac remained empty and throughout my scans I got, the sac remained until my 12 week scan then disappeared. I was happy to see the one baby grew a lot and was healthy. I kept thinking how blessed I am I have one surviving twin, but deep down I am sad about the could have been twin. To this day when I see twins or hear about them I get triggered.*

