

PATIENT INFORMATION

Information for parents who experience the loss of a baby under 24 weeks that sadly died before birth

Our Condolences

The death and loss of a baby can be a deeply distressing experience. As a Unit we would like to offer our deepest sympathies for your loss.

It can be hard to take in information, to make decisions or to imagine how you are going to cope. The health professionals caring for you will provide support and guidance through this sad time.

What happens next?

You are suddenly faced with having to make decisions you never expected to make. It may feel difficult to know what to do. However, the memories of this time with your baby will be important and you should be able to take your time to think about what is right for you.

The health professionals caring for you will help you to talk through options and make decisions. There are choices you can make about what happens to your baby.

If you wish your baby to be blessed (and named), we can arrange this through our Chaplaincy Team or we can help you to arrange this with your own priest, minister or faith representative.

Do I need to register the Birth or Death?

It is not necessary, as there is no legal requirement, to register the birth or death of babies born less than 24 weeks that were not born alive.

Are there tests or investigations that can be done to find out why my baby died?

If the cause is unknown there are tests that can be undertaken with your permission.

Blood tests can be performed on the mother to screen for infection, auto-immune disorders (i.e. Lupus) and diabetes.

A vaginal and placental swab can also be obtained for infection screening.

Other tests may be undertaken on an individual basis.

After your baby is born a small piece of the placenta can be sent to establish whether there were any chromosomal abnormalities. Any test or sample of placenta is only taken with the mother's consent.

Your Obstetrician may discuss the possibility of undertaking a full post mortem on your baby. This will require your written consent as the baby's mother. You will be provided with information regarding what is involved in this procedure before the consent is signed.

It is important to be aware that even after all the tests are complete there is a high chance that we will not be able to tell you why your baby died.

We would hope that all results would be available when you return for your post-natal visit with your Obstetrician at approximately six to eight weeks after the birth.

Funeral Arrangements

You may choose to arrange the funeral privately, or the West Suffolk Hospital will be pleased to undertake this on your behalf.

The Patient Affairs Officer can talk through the funeral choices that are available to you if you wish. The contact number for the Patient Affairs Officer is 01284 713410. Should you connect to an answer-phone please leave a contact name and telephone number and they will get back to you as soon as possible. The Patient Affairs Officer is available from Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm.

We offer a burial through the Woodlands Burial Trust in Culford near Bury St Edmunds. (See separate information leaflet).

You will be offered the details of the date of the funeral and can be informed of the location of where your baby is buried if you wish to know.

A member of the Hospital Chaplaincy Team will commit your baby for burial unless requested otherwise not to do so.

Your baby will be in an individual casket that will be placed with others in one large casket for burial.

A funeral service can also be arranged in the Hospital Chapel if requested, and you can choose to take part in this service if you wish. Relatives and friends are most welcome to attend.

Book of Remembrance

A special book of remembrance is kept in the Hospital Chapel. Families are invited to place an entry in the book at any time. This can be arranged through the Chaplaincy Department or the Patient Affairs Officer. The book is permanently on display in a glass cabinet, in the Chapel itself.

Service of Remembrance

An annual service of 'Remembering and Sharing' is held in the Hospital Chapel on the second Sunday of May every year at 3pm. This service is for all who have lost babies and children, sons and daughters, whatever their age. Everyone welcome, no invitation necessary.

Support

Members of the Hospital Chaplaincy Team and the Patients Affairs Officer can be contacted on the following numbers;

Chaplaincy Department 01284 713486

Patient Affairs Officer 01284 713410

Your midwife will be available to visit you at home as arranged before you leave the hospital.

Our Maternity Counsellor can be contacted and an appointment arranged. Alternatively you can email us below.

Tel 01284 713253 / 712796

A variety of leaflets from national support groups are offered. These provide comprehensive information, telephone numbers and web sites you may find useful.

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