

Support and information you may need when your baby has died before being born

An information guide



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We are sorry to hear that your baby has died.

You must be extremely shocked and finding it hard to understand what has happened. The staff will have given you some information on what happens next, but this leaflet is to give you some additional help and support at this time.

If you would like to discuss what you have been told today, or you have any questions, please contact us on the telephone numbers below.

The staff are available 24 hours a day on the Labour Ward and the Triage Unit to talk through any immediate issues.

Contact Numbers:

The Royal Oldham Hospital

Triage Unit: – 0161 627 8179

Labour Ward: – 0161 627 8255

Bereavement midwife, **Fay Read**, available weekdays 08:00 – 16:00.
Telephone: – 07817023096

Feelings

Feelings that you may experience while you are waiting for your baby to be born may include:

- Disbelief that your baby has died
- Shock
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Sleeplessness
- Loss of appetite

You may feel that you can't go out of the house to face people. You may be unable to sleep or eat. You may feel angry and want to shout, or you may not want to talk to anyone.

These are normal emotions for bereaved families. You may feel you want the baby to be born quickly and the wait is making you feel worse.

In this time it may help to talk to staff, or even access the local or national support groups listed at the end of this leaflet.

Remember, you are not on your own.

What happens next?

You may be given some medication to prepare your body for your baby to be born. This can take up to 48 hours to take effect. However, you may wish to go home first and return later. This will be discussed with you and we will always take your feelings in to consideration.

The way your baby is born will be discussed with you by the midwives and doctors. Most babies are born in hospital if the baby has died, and we will arrange for you to come to the labour ward for this to happen.

You may be shocked to hear that it is safest for you to have your baby normally, and you may feel you would prefer to have a caesarean section. This will be discussed with you if you feel strongly this is what you wish.

We encourage your partner or close friend or family member to remain with you during the entire length of your stay for your support.

You will be offered pain relief whilst you are in labour, and there are all the alternatives such as waterbirth, diamorphine, relaxation, epidural and gas and air.

You will be given medication to induce your labour after you have settled on to the ward. Labour can sometimes take a while to become established and staff will use this time to discuss your feelings about seeing and holding your baby once he or she is born. You may also have some blood tests taken for investigations into why your baby might have died and to ensure your own wellbeing.

When your baby is born, he or she may look a little bit different. The midwife will describe your baby to you if you are not sure you want to see baby straight away.

After the baby is born, you will be given as much time with your baby as you wish. Visitors are very welcome, and there is no restriction on time and number of visitors as long as the midwives can continue to see you are safe and well. Other children are very welcome and we have resources available to help children understand and process what has happened.

Staff will discuss investigations with you to see if a cause may be found for your baby's death. One of these is post mortem. You will be given written information about this. It is your choice whether to have a post mortem on your baby, and you will not be put under any pressure to do so.

Staff will support you to make memories with your baby if this is something you would like to do. We will provide you with a memory box and staff will offer support to make memories such as hand and foot prints, clay imprints, hand and foot casts, photographs and a lock of baby's hair.

What you might consider bringing in to hospital for you and your baby

- You can dress your baby in clothes you have already. If your baby is early or very small we have clothes available that you can dress baby in. These clothes are specially made for very small babies and are provided free of charge from 'Little things and Co' and Judah's Cloud charities
- You may also like to bring books to read to your baby, toys, nappies and toiletries to bath your baby if you wish.
- You may like to bring your own Moses basket, but this isn't essential as we provide one. Photos of the family and drawings from other children may be comforting.

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You can spend as much time as you like with your baby once he or she is born. Family members and friends are also welcome, as are your other children. This time with your baby is important for you now and in the future as it helps with the grieving process.

Our staff will treat your baby just like any other baby, and they will encourage you to do the same. So, think about naming, seeing, holding, bathing your baby, having a blessing, taking photographs and making memories to treasure in the future. Photographs of the family, poems or a letter from you can be placed with your baby if you wish. If you have other children, they may wish to leave a memento too, perhaps a drawing or letter depending on their age and understanding.

It may be you prefer not to see or hold your baby. You will not be put under any pressure to do so if this is what you decide. Staff can describe your baby to you if you prefer not to see the baby. You can change your mind at any point.

What you might need for yourself and your partner

Partners are welcome to stay in the Butterfly suite for the entire length of your stay. You will need toiletries, nightwear, comfortable clothes and outside clothes in case you want to go for a walk.

You can bring your phone. Also a camera if you like, although we have one for you to use. Our staff will also offer to take photos for you too.

It may be an idea to bring snacks and drinks, a favourite pillow or item of comfort to make you feel more at home.

A message for partners

We are very sorry for your loss and we want you to know that we understand that you have also lost your baby, although at times it can feel like a lot of attention is focused on your partner.

Please know that the midwife and bereavement midwife are here to support you as a family and will also signpost you to specific support for partners if that is something you would like.

There are also groups who provide support for family members such as grandparents and other children. Some of these are listed below:

National and local support organisations:

- helpline@uk-sands.org
- info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk
- childbereavementuk.org
- arc-uk.org

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

اگر انگریزی آپ کی پہلی زبان نہیں ہے اور آپ کو مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو ، براہ کرم ترجمانی اور ترجمہ خدمت سے رابطہ کریں

Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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إذا لم تكن الإنجليزية هي لغتك الأولى وتحتاج إلى مساعدة ، فيرجى الاتصال بخدمة الترجمة الشفوية والتحريرية

☎ : 0161 627 8770

@ : interpretation@pat.nhs.uk

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For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

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