

# Support and information you may need if your pregnancy is to be ended for medical reasons

An information guide



# **Support and information you may need if your pregnancy is to be ended for medical reasons**

We are sorry you have had to make the difficult decision to end your pregnancy.

We understand this is a distressing time for you and your family.

You may be 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 support and help at this time.

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

**Staff are available on the labour ward and maternity triage/ maternity assessment unit 24 hours a day to talk through any immediate issues.**

## **Contact numbers**

### **Royal Oldham Hospital:**

Triage unit: 0161 627 8179

Pennine Fetal Unit: 0161 778 5183

Gynaecology Assessment Unit: 0161 627 8855

Labour ward: 0161 627 8255

Bereavement midwife: 07817 023096

Spiritual and emotional care team: 0161 778 5259 or  
[www.pat.nhs.uk](http://www.pat.nhs.uk)

### **North Manchester General Hospital:**

Maternity Assessment Unit: 0161 922 3167

Labour ward: 0161 625 8008

Bereavement midwife: 07817 023547

Spiritual and emotional care team: 0161 778 5259 or  
[www.pat.nhs.uk](http://www.pat.nhs.uk)

## Feelings

Some feelings you may experience are:-

- Disbelief
- Shock
- Anxiety
- Sleeplessness
- Loss of appetite
- Guilt
- Anger
- Confusion

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

You may also feel the wait for your baby to be born is making it worse. You may feel guilty about ending a much wanted pregnancy.

These feelings are normal. It may help to talk to others who have gone through a similar experience. At the end of this leaflet there is a list of support groups you may find helpful.

**Remember, you are not on your own.**

## What happens next?

You will be given a tablet called Mifepristone to prepare your body for the delivery of your baby. This is given at the hospital. After a short time, usually about 30 minutes, you will be able to go home. You may experience some discomfort, for which you can take paracetamol, but it is advisable not to take Aspirin or Ibuprofen. You should return to the hospital if you experience bleeding or pain. The staff will arrange for you to come in to hospital about 48 hours later to continue with the medication which will end your pregnancy. You may be asked to phone the ward beforehand to confirm the arrangements.

Although it is uncommon, a baby born **below 22 weeks** gestation may gasp, breathe or have a heart rate at birth. If this happens, you and your baby will be cared for in a dignified way. However, by law, if your baby does show signs of life at birth, the coroner will need to be informed by staff. Your baby's birth and death will need to be registered at the registry office where you will receive a birth and death certificate for your baby. If the coroner is involved, this may mean the funeral cannot be held on the same day. Staff will advise and assist you if this is the case.

If your pregnancy is **over 22 weeks**, it will be suggested the baby is given an injection to ensure the baby's heart stops before birth. This procedure is carried out at St. Mary's Hospital in Manchester. After the procedure, you will return to this hospital and the medication which will end your pregnancy will continue. Whilst it is not compulsory for this procedure, it is recommended practice.

Staff will be able to explain this more fully to you.

## **Funeral options**

You will be given information on funeral options for your baby.

This may come as a shock as you may not have considered this. Staff will guide and help you to make the best decision for you and your family. You do not need to make a quick decision about a funeral, there will be plenty of time to think about possible options.

## **What will my baby look like?**

Most parents are surprised to find their baby looks just like any other baby, just much smaller. You will usually find baby's skin is darker than normal. If you feel unsure about seeing your baby, staff can describe how baby looks and you can decide later.

## **Will the birth be painful?**

You will go through a birthing process which is like labour. You will be offered pain relief such as diamorphine, gas and air or epidural. Sometimes, the baby can be born quickly with not much warning as baby will be smaller than a baby born at full term.

## **What about visitors?**

If you are cared for on the labour ward, you will be in a single comfortable room, and visitors are welcomed and encouraged at any time of day or night. Partners are welcome to stay with you at all times. Other children are also welcome to visit.

If you are cared for on the gynaecology ward, every effort will be made to ensure you have a private room, although this is not always possible. Partners are welcome to stay at all times.

## **How long can I spend with my baby?**

This is entirely up to you.

On the labour ward there is a facility to keep baby cool so he or she can stay in your room with you whilst you are in hospital. You may also be take baby home prior to the funeral in certain circumstances if you wish, possibly to spend time in their planned nursery.

Ask the staff for more information about this if it's something you think you might like to do. If your pregnancy is over 20 weeks gestation, there is also an option to spend time at a local children's hospice with your baby and your family. Staff will be able to give you more information on this.

## **Can I dress my baby and take photographs?**

It can be difficult to find clothes small enough to dress very tiny babies, but we do have a supply, which have been specially sourced for you to choose from. Sometimes, even these are too big, so baby will be placed in an 'Angel Pocket' instead.

You are welcome and encouraged to take photos of your baby.

We have a camera on the ward if you don't have your own, and staff will be happy to take photos for you too.

You will also be offered a memory box to keep mementoes of your baby in.

Our staff will treat your baby just like any other baby, and they will encourage you to do the same.

## **What if I don't want to see or hold my baby?**

No one will pressurise you to see, hold or take photos of your baby if it's not what you want. If you prefer baby to be taken away from your bedside after he or she has been born, this can be arranged. If you change your mind later about seeing baby, that is also ok.

## **Is there anything else I need to consider?**

You may want to bring personal items in to hospital with you, such as a favourite pillow. Nice toiletries or photos of the family are pleasant reminders of home. Other children may want to draw a picture for the baby. You may have a favourite children's book you would like to read to your baby, or your choice in music. You may also like to bring your favourite snacks and drinks.

## **Investigations**

Staff may suggest further investigations are carried out after your baby is born.

This may include a post mortem examination. We understand this is a difficult and distressing topic to discuss, and you have the right to choose. However, information provided from investigations may prove beneficial to you and your family in providing an understanding of what happened in your pregnancy.

Further information on this is available from staff who will be happy to talk to you about the procedure. There is also written information to help you decide.

The results of any investigations will be fed back to you a few weeks after your baby has been born.

## **Is there anyone else who can help?**

The chaplaincy department can offer support to you and your family.

We have chaplains of all denominations who are willing to offer their support. There is also an annual baby loss service to anyone who has lost a baby. The chaplains are happy to bless your baby if you wish.

There is also a counselling service which is available after the loss of your baby, particularly under these circumstances.

Staff will be able to give you more information on both of these services.

## **Helpful organisations**

Antenatal Results and Choices (A.R.C) - This is a group who support families who end or continue their pregnancy when there is a problem in pregnancy. [arc-uk.org](http://arc-uk.org)

[helpline@sands-uk.org](mailto:helpline@sands-uk.org)

[childbereavementuk.org](http://childbereavementuk.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

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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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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**

The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group (NCA) is one of the largest NHS organisations in the country, employing 17,000 staff and providing a range of hospital and community healthcare services to around 1 million people across Salford, Oldham, Bury, Rochdale and surrounding areas. Our Care Organisations are responsible for providing our services, delivering safe, high quality and reliable care to the local communities they serve.

The NCA brings together Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and the hospitals and community services of The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, and Rochdale Infirmary (currently part of The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust).

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