

# Information and support following the loss of your baby (before the end of 24 weeks of pregnancy with no signs of life)

## Introduction

This leaflet provides information for bereaved parents who have suffered the loss of a baby before 24 weeks of pregnancy. Please accept our sympathy at such a difficult time. We hope you find the following information helpful.

## A blessing for your baby

When your baby is born your midwife or nurse, with your permission, can contact the hospital chaplain or your own religious leader. Even if you do not have a particular religious faith, you may find it helpful to talk to one of them, and you may like a blessing for your baby.

## Hospital certificate in memory of your baby

As your baby was less than 24 weeks gestation you are not required by law to register your baby's birth, but a hospital certificate can be arranged as a tribute if you wish.

## Private funeral arrangements

If you would like to make private funeral arrangements for your baby, then you can contact a funeral director who will make sure that everything is done in line with your wishes. You will find that most funeral directors offer their service free of charge but there will be a charge for a burial. There will be no charge for a cremation.

If you would like more information, please contact the Bereavement Support Midwife. The telephone number is at the end of this leaflet.

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Department

Maternity

Review due

January 2027

**Patient  
Information**

## Burial on private land

You can take your baby from the hospital for burial in ground that you own (not in council or common ground). You would need to contact the Environment Agency or your local council for official guidance and advice. The hospital Bereavement Office staff will be able to advise you.

## Hospital cremation service

If you do not wish to make your own arrangements, the Trust will make sure that your baby is cremated with dignity and respect. This will be carried out at a crematorium following a short religious service led by the hospital chaplain.

There will be a number of other babies included in the service as part of a communal cremation and for reasons of confidentiality, we are sorry to say that you will not be able to attend. A record of the event will be kept at the hospital and the hospital chaplain can let you know when the service has been carried out. You will not be able to have any ashes from a communal cremation.

You will be asked to sign a form giving your permission for the cremation of your baby. We would encourage you to take time to decide which option is right for you.

If you have made the decision for a communal hospital cremation and then wish to change your mind, please contact the Bereavement Office or the Bereavement Support Midwife within 5 working days following the delivery of your baby.

## Remembering your baby

Losing a baby means you have few memories or mementoes. This can bring added sorrow. You will be offered as much help as possible with this. Your nurse or midwife will talk about the options available to you.

There is a book of remembrance in the hospital chapel in which you are very welcome to enter a message in memory of your baby. The ward staff will give you a form to do this if you wish, please do not hesitate to ask.

## Patient Information

Each year, in October, a Service of Remembrance will be held at St Luke's Church, Cheltenham. Information about this service is available from the hospital chaplain, the telephone number is at the end of this leaflet.

### Further support

If you are already booked with a community-based midwife she will visit you at home if you wish. Your GP will be informed about the loss of your baby and may also be able to offer you support. The Bereavement Support Midwife is also available to give you support if needed.

### Contact information

#### Bereavement Support Midwife

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 07799 060 328 or 07812 700 625

Office: 0300 422 5564

Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 7:00 am to 5:30pm

Please leave a message, your call will be returned during the next working day.

#### Hospital Chaplains

Tel: 0300 422 6200

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

#### Bereavement Officer

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 6742

Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:00pm

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## Making a choice

### Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



### Ask 3 Questions

**To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.**

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

\* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>