

Leaflet A: Information following an early or mid-term pregnancy loss

Information for parents from Women's Health

We apologise if this leaflet reaches you at an inappropriate time for you and your family. We are aware that no two people react in quite the same way to this kind of loss. Some may see it as the loss of a few cells, others as nature taking its course, whilst others may see it as losing a baby. We appreciate and respect all views and because of this, treat all these losses with respect.

To help answer some of your questions as to what happens next we have produced this leaflet. It explains how our Trust treats both early and mid-term pregnancy losses and describes some of the support available for you and your family.

What happens following an early pregnancy loss? (up to 15 weeks and six days gestation)

Unless the mother tells us otherwise, all early pregnancy losses will receive communal cremation. This involves individual losses – each personally identified – being cremated together at Thanet Crematorium on the last Thursday of each month*. If you wish to attend the service please contact the Chaplain's Office to find out which month your loss will be included. Please note, that following the communal cremation, ashes are not returned to parents but are scattered in the Baby and Child area of St John's Cemetery (next to Thanet Crematorium).

It is your personal choice whether or not you attend this ceremony, and you will be supported in whatever you decide to do. More information about this simple, confidential, and respectful service is available from the hospital chaplains, whose contact numbers are listed on page 3 of this leaflet.

If, for strictly religious or cultural reasons, you are unhappy with these arrangements, you will need to contact the hospital chaplains **within two weeks of your loss**. The chaplains will be pleased to discuss other options available at no cost to you and your family.

*Should this fall on a public holiday the ceremony will normally take place on the last working day before at the same time and place. We recommend that you confirm this with the hospital chaplains.



Please note that very early miscarriages are sometimes difficult to identify, either visually or by scientific investigation. Therefore, in some rare cases, the loss may not be included in the communal ceremony, but this does not prevent you or your family attending the service as part of your grieving process.

What happens following a mid-term pregnancy loss? (16 to 23 weeks and six days gestation)

Parents may choose individual cremation, individual burial, or communal cremation (as mentioned in the previous paragraph). You will need to complete and sign certain paperwork so we can proceed with the arrangements. Where parents do not tell us which option they prefer within three weeks of their loss, or intimate that they do not wish to be involved in any way whatsoever, their baby will be included with the early losses in the monthly communal cremation ceremony.

Parents may of course, make their own private arrangements and would need to sign certain documents saying that this is their wish. In such cases families will be expected to meet all the financial costs involved.

Please note that if you have agreed to a post-mortem examination and have chosen communal cremation* for your baby, you are strongly advised to contact the hospital chaplains around three weeks after your loss as, occasionally, the investigations may still be awaiting completion and your baby may have to be included in a later ceremony.

*The communal cremation ceremony is held on the last Thursday of the month at Thanet Crematorium. Please note, that following the communal cremation, ashes are not returned to parents but are scattered in the Baby and Child area of St John's Cemetery (next to Thanet Crematorium). If you wish to attend the service, please contact the Chaplain's Office to find out which month your loss will be included. Should this fall on a public holiday the ceremony will normally take place on the last working day before at the same time and place. We recommend that you confirm this with the hospital chaplains.

Will there be any cost involved?

If the hospital is making the arrangements the Trust will cover all basic costs, whether cremation or burial. Some families may wish to contribute to the Trust's costs if they feel it would help the grieving process and should contact the hospital chaplains if they wish to do so. There will however, be added expenses should you wish, for example to use an alternative funeral director, choose a graveyard or crematorium out of our designated area, book limousines for family transportation, or place private commemoration. All these extra costs would have to be met by the family.

What about memorial books and services?

There are memorial books in the chapels of our hospitals in Ashford, Canterbury, and Margate. If you would like your baby's name entered, please contact one of the hospital chaplains. There is no charge for this service.

In addition, we hold an annual baby memorial service which many parents have found to be both a healing and helpful experience. If you would like us to contact you with details of this service, please complete and sign the attached slip, tear it off, and hand it to your nurse, midwife, or doctor or post it on to the address given.

Helping us to help others

We hope this leaflet has been helpful and reassuring to you at this difficult time. It is a painful and sensitive subject to raise with parents and families who are experiencing a wide variety of feelings and emotions. We are always looking to improve the care we give to parents and families like yourselves, irrespective of how and at what stage the pregnancy ended. We welcome any comments - positive or negative - that you may have on the help and support we have offered during your time of loss. We wish you well for the future and assure you of our continuing care and concern.

Contact numbers

- **William Harvey Hospital, Ashford**

- Chaplains Telephone: 01233 63 33 31 extension 723-8014
- Bereavement Support Officers Telephone: 01233 61 68 87
- Women's Health Counsellor Telephone: 01233 63 33 31 and ask for the switchboard to make contact)
- Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Telephone: 01227 78 31 45

- **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate**

- Chaplains Telephone: 01843 23 42 73
- Bereavement Support Officers Telephone: 01843 23 44 52
- Women's Health Counsellor Telephone: 01843 22 55 44 extension 725-3049
- Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Telephone: 01227 78 31 45

- **Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury**

- Chaplains Telephone: 01843 23 42 73
- Bereavement Support Officers Telephone: 01227 86 40 06
- Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Telephone: 01227 78 31 45

- **Other helpful contacts**

- Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS) Telephone: 020 74 36 58 81
- Child Bereavement Charity Telephone: 01494 56 89 00
- Miscarriage Association Telephone: 01924 20 07 99

- **Thanet Crematorium**

Manston Road, Margate
Kent CT9 4LY
Telephone: 01843 57 73 33

Please complete and sign this slip so we can contact you with details of our annual Baby Memorial Service.

I (full name of mother) _____

of (full address including postcode) _____

Telephone number(s) _____

Hereby give my permission for East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust to contact me with details of the annual Baby Memorial Service

Signed _____ Date _____

Please tear off and hand to your nurse, midwife, or doctor or post to:

Chaplaincy Office, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital, St Peter's Road, Margate CT9 4AN

This leaflet has been produced with and for women and their families

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation

Information produced by Women's Health

Date reviewed: August 2021

Next review date: December 2024

EKH769