



Health and safety information for parents wishing to take their pregnancy loss home for burial

Information for families

We apologise if this leaflet reaches you at a difficult time for you and your family. No two people react in quite the same way to a pregnancy loss. We appreciate and respect all views.

This leaflet contains information for parents, who wish to plan the burial of their pregnancy loss within the grounds of their own home. It covers areas that you need to think about before you decide. If after reading this leaflet you still have questions or concerns, please speak to a member of the Trust's bereavement or chaplaincy teams.

Our Trust does offer alternative funeral arrangements. For further details, please speak to a member of ward staff or the Chaplain's Office. Or ask for a copy of the **Information following an early or mid-term pregnancy loss** leaflet.

We strongly recommend that parents think very carefully about these options before they decide. If you think you would find it helpful, the Trust can offer counselling or practical help through its chaplains and / or women's health counsellor. Please speak to your Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit nurse or midwife for further details of this service. The contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

Please note, if further tests are requested by your clinician following a pregnancy loss, this usually takes between 4 to 6 weeks. Arrangements for collection of a pregnancy loss cannot be made until this is complete.

When deciding, what do parents need to do first?

Parents are strongly advised to speak to the Environment Agency, when thinking about the burial of a baby under 23 weeks and 6 days gestation in a private garden. The Environment Agency can give parents specialist advice and information.

- **Environment Agency**
Telephone: 03708 506506

Please note, that it is illegal to bury babies that are over 24 weeks gestation in this way. The law requires burial or cremation in an authorised cemetery or crematorium only.

What do parents need to consider?

Before deciding, you need to think about the following.

- Not causing danger to others. Please contact the Environment Agency for up-to-date advice.
- Parents need to get permission from the landowner for a burial. Does anyone else have rights to the land you are planning to use for the burial?
- There must be no danger to water supplies and water courses.
- There must be no chance of fluids leaking into or onto neighbouring land.
- The burial should take place at a depth greater than 24 inches from the top of the casket.
- The burial needs to be added to the property deeds, which could lower the value of the property.
- Speak to the neighbours. They may find this upsetting, especially if the grave is marked.
- What will happen if you move home? Or the land is re-developed one day for a different purpose? Consider burial in a planter or container, which allows for easier relocation if you move home.

Do parents need to use a funeral director?

We recommend that parents appoint a funeral director. If you do not wish to do this, you can decide to collect your pregnancy loss from the hospital mortuary yourself.

If you do decide to do this, please phone the Bereavement Office first. To help and support parents, someone from the Trust's Chaplaincy Department will often go with you to collect your loss.

Please note, before you can take your baby home, you will need to sign some paperwork and show the mortuary staff a photographic ID. This could be a driver's licence or passport.

Contact details

If after reading this leaflet you have any other questions, please contact us using the details below.

- **Bereavement Support Offices**
 - Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate
Telephone: 01843 234452
Email (ekhuftrsoqeqm@nhs.net)
 - William Harvey Hospital, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 616887
Email (ekhuftrsowhh@nhs.net)

- **Bereavement Midwives**

Email (ekhuft.bereavementmidwives@nhs.net)

- **Chaplain's Offices**

The Chaplain's Offices are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury
Telephone: 01227 864095
- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate
Telephone: 01843 234273
- William Harvey Hospital, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 633331 extension 723-8014

- **Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit (EPAU) clinics**

- Birchington Ward, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate
Telephone: 01843 234469
- Women's Health Suite, William Harvey Hospital, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 633331 extension: 723-8268

Other useful contacts

- **Environment Agency**

Telephone: 03708 506506

- **Miscarriage Association**

Telephone: 01924 200799

- **SANDS**

Telephone: 0808 164 3332

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring 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 has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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