

# **Losing your baby between twelve and twenty-four weeks of pregnancy**

## **Information for parents including arranging a funeral**



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We are sorry that you have suffered a miscarriage. If there is anything we can do to help you, please do not hesitate to ask.

We have tried to answer some questions which we are often asked. If you have any others, please ask them.

## **Why did the miscarriage happen and why did it happen to me?**

Although about 1 in 5 pregnancies end in miscarriage, it is usually very difficult to determine the cause.

You will probably never know the reason why you have miscarried, and this can be very hard to accept. You must not blame yourself, as it is not your fault.

There are several known causes of miscarriage:

- 1) **Genetic problems:** About 50% of early miscarriages occur because the baby does not develop normally in some way.
- 2) **Abnormalities of the Uterus (womb):** Abnormalities are rare. The most common is a condition called bicornuate uterus which can be treated by a small operation.
- 3) **Infection:** High fever, German measles and Listeria-type infections (found in some chilled foods) may cause a miscarriage. It is unlikely that minor infections, such as the common cold, will do any damage. Sexually transmitted infections are also unlikely to cause miscarriage.
- 4) **Hormones:** If the balance of pregnancy hormones is not quite right, then the body may reject the pregnancy.
- 5) **Cervical incompetence:** During a normal pregnancy, the cervix (neck of the uterus) is tightly closed. If the cervix is 'incompetent', it may open as

the uterus grows and becomes heavier. This is more common in later pregnancy e.g., after the 12th week.

There is a leaflet 'Causes of Miscarriage' by the Miscarriage Association. If you would care to read it, please visit the website; [ww.miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk)

### **Will I need to go to theatre?**

It may be advisable to gently empty your womb (uterus). Your doctor will discuss this with you.

### **How long is the bleeding expected to go on for after a miscarriage or D & C?**

The bleeding may go on up to 14 days, just like the tail end of a period. You should not use tampons during this time. It is normal to experience some tummy cramps and pass a few small clots, especially after lying down

If you have severe abdominal pain, heavy bleeding or an unpleasant discharge you should see your family doctor as soon as possible as you may need antibiotics or other treatment.

Although a bath or shower will not do you any harm, swimming is not recommended until the bleeding has completely stopped.

You should avoid intercourse for one week or until the bleeding stops.

Your periods will usually return to normal within 4 - 6 weeks but this does vary with each person. We recommend that you allow yourself one normal period before trying for another baby.

## **Will I need to see a doctor after I go home?**

We will write to your GP so that they know what has happened to you. They will give you help, support and advice if you need it. You do not need to make an appointment to see them unless you wish to.

We may make an appointment for you to see your consultant in about six weeks, when the results of any tests done will be available.

This will give you an opportunity to ask any questions about what has happened in this pregnancy and your future. Some women have found it helpful to write these down.

## **What happens to my baby?**

Some women ask to see what they have lost, but it is not always possible to see a recognisable baby. This is likely to be the case if you miscarry at less than 14 weeks of pregnancy or need to go to theatre. Also, we may not be able to identify the sex of a baby born so early.

It is usual that all babies / remains of pregnancy under 12 weeks gestation are sent to the laboratory for inspection where they are treated with the greatest respect. We will discuss this with you at the time.

It is your choice as to whether or not you would like to see your baby or the remains. The nurse or midwife looking after you will discuss this with you.

We will take photographs of your baby for you if we can, but this may not be possible if you were less than 14 weeks pregnant or needed to go to theatre.

## **Arranging a funeral**

All the information in this leaflet will be discussed with you by the Medical Examiners Officer, nurse, midwife or one of our Hospital Chaplains. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions of them or any of the other staff looking after you.

## **Private arrangements**

You may choose to arrange a private cremation or burial service for your baby if you wish. This gives you the opportunity to choose the place where you would like the funeral service to be held, to have an individual grave (if burial is chosen) and to have a minister of your choice present.

A private funeral is not necessarily expensive, most Funeral Directors do not charge for their administrative arrangements. There are however some charges which are inevitable, details of these can be discussed with the Funeral Director.

## **A hospital arranged funeral**

The hospital will meet the cost of a basic funeral arranged through our Funeral Directors. Your involvement in the arrangements can be as much or as little as you wish.

**If you choose to be involved in the arrangements**, we will put you in touch with our Funeral Director and can offer you either burial or cremation for your baby.

If you decide to choose burial, the funeral will be held at Weston Mill Cemetery. Your baby will be buried in an area shared by other babies and known as the 'Babies Garden of Remembrance'. Many parents find it comforting to know that their baby is amongst other babies. With a shared grave there is no headstone, and you need to know that after your baby is buried, the

ground may be disturbed later for other burials. This means that it will be difficult to know the exact location of your baby.

Although there is no headstone on the babies shared grave, the area is surrounded by rose beds and you can purchase a rosebush together with a memorial plaque for this area. A Book of Remembrance, specifically for babies, is held at Weston Mill Cemetery and you may wish to enter details of your baby into this book, free of charge. The Funeral Director will be there to help you at this difficult time, but if you wish to have any of these memorials at a later date, this can be arranged by contacting Weston Mill Lodge on 01752 304837.

Please be aware that parents are not permitted to put any items other than fresh flowers on the site of burial and anything placed on the grave will be removed after the funeral (usually within 1-2 weeks).

Cremation can be arranged at Weston Mill Crematorium, if you choose cremation, it is important that you realise that there may be no residual ashes.

If you feel that you do not wish to be involved in the funeral, we will understand, as this is not unusual. We can make the arrangements for you and the funeral will be conducted by one of the Hospital chaplains. Your baby will be buried, together with the other babies, in the Babies Garden of Remembrance at Weston Mill. Only hospital staff, funeral directors staff and Weston Mill staff are present at the burial but, we can reassure you that even if you do not feel you can be there, your baby will be treated with dignity and respect.

You may decide, at a later date, to have a memorial for your baby at the cemetery or include your babies name in the Book of Remembrance. Please contact the Weston Mill Lodge 01752 304837 if you wish this to happen. They will give you any assistance you require.

**Please note that if you choose not to be involved in the funeral arrangements and then change your mind within one month, you must contact the Medical Examiners Officer on (01752) 438343 or via the hospital switchboard on (01752) 202802.**

A memorial service for babies is normally held twice a year, on the first Sunday of March and October, starting at 2pm. You and your relatives and friends are very welcome to attend.

There is also a Babies Book of Remembrance in the Hospital Chapel and you can have your baby's name entered in this by completing the enclosed form.

**We hope that you have found this leaflet useful. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the staff who were caring for you.**

<b>Ocean Suite</b>	<b>01752 439877</b>
<b>Early Pregnancy Unit</b>	<b>01752 763676</b>
<b>Central Delivery Suite</b>	<b>01752 430091</b>
<b>Bereavement Midwife</b>	<b>01752 433148</b>



**This leaflet is available in large print  
and other formats and languages.  
Contact: Administrator  
Tel: 01752 245136**

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