

Early Pregnancy Loss Patient Information Leaflet



**Examination & Burial or Cremation
Arrangements up to 12 weeks gestation**

Early Pregnancy Loss (up to 12 weeks gestation)

Coping with an early pregnancy loss can be very distressing and each person may experience this loss in different ways.

Please remember that nursing, midwifery and medical staff are available to discuss any questions and concerns you may have.

This leaflet provides information about the examination that is routinely carried out on pregnancy loss tissue and the choices you have about burial or cremation.

If you would like more detailed information about miscarriage, please see the links provided at the end of this leaflet.

What is Early Pregnancy Loss?

Early pregnancy loss is defined as a loss during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy (the first trimester) also known as an early miscarriage.

Unfortunately many women experience miscarriages and it is estimated that one in six pregnancies will sadly end in a miscarriage.

Importantly, losing three or more pregnancies in a row (recurrent miscarriages) is uncommon and affects around 1 in 100 women.

Examination of Early Pregnancy Loss Tissue

Pregnancy tissue is routinely examined in the laboratory to see if a reason can be found for the miscarriage and to rule out the presence of a molar pregnancy (where the placenta has not developed normally). Molar pregnancies require follow up investigation.

Early pregnancy loss tissue may include the gestational sac, placenta and fetus. The term fetus refers to a developing baby before birth. Some fetal tissue can only be identified under a microscope and although a tiny fetus may be seen on ultrasound scan in early pregnancy, fetal tissue is normally only identified in around 1 out of 100 early pregnancy losses.

There are several reasons for this: an embryo may not have developed or the fetus may have died some time ago and the tissue has been reabsorbed. Also at this very early stage of pregnancy, the tissues of a tiny fetus are very delicate and fragment easily, becoming mixed in with the placental tissues, and are not easily seen.

In the examination of early pregnancy loss tissue, most information is gained from the gestational sac and placenta. Should fetal tissue be identified, it is not examined, in line with current professional guidance.

Please note that if only a small amount of early pregnancy loss tissue is available, it may be necessary to use all of it in the examination and there may be no tissue remaining for burial or cremation.

Your GP will be able to obtain a copy of the laboratory report at your request.

Burial or Cremation Arrangements

Staff will explain to you whether Trust Burial or Cremation is the practice in your hospital. Alternatively you may wish to make your own family Burial or Cremation arrangements.

You will be asked to indicate your choice on the **Early Pregnancy Loss - Record of Burial or Cremation Arrangements** form and you will be given a copy of this form when it is completed.

It is important that you indicate your choice for Trust **or** Family Burial / Cremation on the form. If this is not done, the Trust will understand that you do not wish to make these arrangements and will proceed with Trust Burial or Cremation.

Trust Burial / Cremation

The Trust will bury or cremate any unexamined early pregnancy loss tissue, unless you indicate that you wish to collect it for family burial or cremation.

Please note if you indicate that you would like to proceed with Trust burial or cremation and subsequently change your mind to make your own family arrangements, you **must** contact your Trust using the contact number provided as soon as possible. Please make contact **no later than 14 days from the date of your pregnancy loss** so that your wishes can be accommodated.

Following Trust cremation of an early pregnancy loss, cremated remains cannot be returned to you. The cremated remains are scattered in a Crematorium Garden of Remembrance after cremation.

Trust Burial or Cremation is funded by the Trust.

Family Burial / Cremation

If you wish to have your early pregnancy loss tissue returned to you for family burial or cremation, you will be contacted by the Trust when it is ready for collection. You may collect the tissue yourself, or arrange for a family member or family funeral director to do this for you.

Trusts will ask for a form of ID or a copy of the record of burial / cremation form or a signed note from the mother, when pregnancy loss tissue is being collected from the Mortuary.

When choosing family burial or cremation, please note that if you do not arrange collection **within 12 weeks** of being contacted, the Trust will then make arrangements to bury or cremate the tissue.

Family burial or cremation is not funded by the Trust, however cremation of early pregnancy loss tissue is provided free of charge at City of Belfast Crematorium, Roselawn.

Follow Up

In some cases, you may be offered a follow up appointment. However, if you have any concerns or questions you should contact your GP in the first instance; they will be able to provide advice and refer you to another service if required.

After Miscarriage

A miscarriage can be an emotionally and physically draining experience. Guidance and support is available at this time from hospital staff and support organisations. Ward staff can give you information if you would like to speak with someone. Each Trust holds services of remembrance every year and books of remembrance are also available. Please ask ward staff for information.

Having a miscarriage does not necessarily mean you will have another one if you get pregnant again. Most women are able to have a healthy pregnancy after a miscarriage, even in cases of recurrent miscarriages.

Further information and support

Southern Heath and Social Care Trust Hospital Contact:

Gynae Wards: 02837562219 or 02837562231.

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) leaflet on early miscarriage available at:

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/patients/patient-information-leaflets/pregnancy/pi-early-miscarriage.pdf>

Miscarriage Association UK

Offers information, including support for partners; on-line support and a helpline 019 2420 0799, Mon-Fri 9.00-16.00

<https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/information/>

NHS Choices leaflet available at:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Miscarriage/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Lifeline

<https://www.lifelinehelpline.info/>

Counsellors available 24/7 Tel: 0808 808 8000

Local Support Groups

Aching Arms - Provide help and support for people who have experienced the heartbreak of losing their baby, during pregnancy, at birth or soon after.

Website: www.achingarms.co.uk Tel: 07464508994

Centred Soul (Newry) - A social enterprise which runs a PAILS (Pregnancy & Infancy Loss Support) Group once a month.

Website www.centredsoul.co.uk

Tel: 07719051393 Email: info@centredsoul.co.uk

Cradle - Pregnancy loss charity

Tel: 03334434630 Email: info@cradlecharity.org

Website: www.cradlecharity.org

Feileacain (The Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Association of Ireland) - Supporting anyone affected by the death of a baby during or after pregnancy

Website: <https://feileacain.ie/>

Tel: 00353852496464 Email: admin@feileacain.ie

Joel Baby Loss Charity - Supporting families through pregnancy and parenting after baby loss

Website: <https://joeltcp.org/>

Tel: 07591740287

Mariposa Trust - Provides services and support for people who have lost children at any stage of pregnancy, at birth, or in infancy, be it last week or 60-years ago.

Website: <https://www.mariposatrust.org/>

Tel: 03003231350 Email: info@mariposatrust.org

Miscarriage Association NI - Peer support Group (NI)

Website: www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Email: magroupni@gmail.com

SANDS (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity) - Supporting anyone affected by the death of a baby and promoting research to reduce the loss of babies' lives. Support Group meetings held across NI

SANDS Regional Office: Magharee House, 82 Thomas Street, Portadown BT62 3NU

Website: <https://northernireland.sands.org.uk/>

NI Helpline 07740993450 Email: NorthernIreland@sands.org.uk

Tommys - Support, care for and champion people, no matter where they may be on their pregnancy journey

Website: www.tommys.org Tel: 08000147800

Twins Trust - Supports all parents and carers of twins, triplets or more who have died whether it was during or after pregnancy.

Website: <https://twinstrust.org/bereavement.html>

Little Forget Me Nots Trust - A charity that supports parents grieving the loss of a child, including pregnancy loss.

Website: www.littleforgetmenotstrust.com