John Radcliffe and Horton General Hospital

Respectful disposal of pregnancy remains following an early pregnancy loss
We understand that this may be an emotional time for you and hope that the following information will be helpful.

You may find yourself with some sensitive decisions to make. This leaflet has been written to explain the practical choices that you have.

Please do ask if you need further questions answered or would like more information.
Sensitive and respectful disposal of pregnancy remains

Following your pregnancy loss, there are several options available to you:

• hospital burial, carried out on your behalf
• hospital burial, which you can attend
• private and individual arrangements.

The timing of the arrangements may vary if investigations have been requested. Tissue from early pregnancy loss may be sent to Histopathology or our genetics laboratories, to try to find out the cause of your loss. This should have been discussed with you.

Tissue in the form of laboratory (histology) blocks and slides, which are used for diagnostic purposes, are normally stored as part of your medical record.
Hospital burial carried out on your behalf

You may decide that you want the remains of your pregnancy to be respectfully buried.

If you choose not to be involved, we can arrange for this to take place during a communal burial, carried out by the Trust’s appointed Funeral Director. The hospital will be responsible for the funding and arrangements.

Hospital burial with your attendance

If you would like to attend a burial service, please ask the nurse looking after you to contact the Bereavement Centre.

A funeral can be a helpful way of saying goodbye and coming to terms with what has happened. The Chaplaincy Service are available to give you support whilst you are in hospital.

For information about this funeral service please contact the Bereavement Centre:
Tel: 01295 229 386
(Monday to Friday, 7.00am to 3.00pm)

Private and individual arrangements

You can also make your own private arrangements. If you would prefer this option, a local Funeral Director will be able to guide you through the process and answer any queries you may have. Most Funeral Directors do not charge for their professional advice. They will be happy to discuss your wishes and concerns, before taking any formal instructions to go ahead with the funeral arrangements.

Crematoriums do not normally charge for this type of cremation. However, when considering cremation it is important to be aware that there may be little or no cremated remains to be returned to you.
Can anything be put in the casket?

If you have decided on a private burial, items such as cards, photographs, small soft toys or jewellery may be placed inside the coffin.

If you have decided on cremation, cards, photographs or small soft toys may be placed in the casket, but jewellery or glass cannot be cremated.

The Funeral Director will be able to guide you if you are unsure of what you can include.

Burial at home

You can, if you wish to, take the remains of your pregnancy home to bury yourself. If you choose to do this, there are certain environmental requirements which need to be met:

- The burial must not cause any danger to others.
- It must not interfere with any rights other people have on the land.
- There must be no danger to water supplies or watercourses.
- There must be no chance of bodily fluids passing into or onto adjoining land.
- The remains must be buried at a depth of at least 18 inches (45cm).
- Permission must be obtained from the landowner if you do not own the land.
- Careful thought must be given when considering burial in a garden, taking into account what would happen if you move house or the land is used for new purposes in the future.
Blessing, prayers and pastoral care

If you would like the opportunity to discuss a blessing or need pastoral support following your pregnancy loss, please ask the staff looking after you to contact the Hospital Chaplain.

Chaplains are available for everyone and offer impartial care for you, your family, friends and people of all faiths and none.

Tel: 01865 857 921
Email: chaplaincy@ouh.nhs.uk

Sometimes it may not be possible for the Chaplaincy team to see you during your hospital stay. If this is the case, we advise you contact your own religious advisor.
Further support

Support can also usually be offered through your GP, as well as from the following organisations and support groups.

**Women’s Centre Counselling Service**
This offers a relevant counselling service.
Tel: 01865 221 235
This is not a 24 hours service, but an answering machine is always available.

**Miscarriage Association**
The Miscarriage Association offers support and information for those affected by pregnancy loss, including support in another pregnancy. There is a network of support groups and telephone contacts throughout the UK.
Helpline: 01924 200 799
Website: www/miscarriageassociation.org.uk/
Email: info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk

**Talking Space Plus**
Talking Space Plus offers more general counselling and the chance to help yourself to cope with life’s ups and downs, to feel better, and to learn your own strategies for keeping well.
Helpline: 01865 901 222
Website: talkingspaceplus.org.uk/contact-us/
Email: talkingspaceplus@nhs.net
If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call 01865 221 473 or email PALS@ouh.nhs.uk

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May 2017
Review: May 2020
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