



Isle of Wight
NHS Trust

Patient Information Leaflet

Born too soon For babies that are born before 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Produced by:
Maternity

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SMOKEFREE
Isle of Wight

The logo for Smokefree Isle of Wight, featuring a stylized icon of a person with arms raised above the text.

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If you are unable to read this leaflet because English is not your first language, please ask someone who speaks English to telephone PALS on 01983 534850 for further information and help.

Polish:

Jeśli nie jesteś w stanie przeczytać tej ulotki bo angielski nie jest pierwszym językiem, poproś kogoś, kto mówi po angielsku, o kontakt telefoniczny z (PALS 01983 534850) aby uzyskać więcej informacji i pomoc

Russian:

Если вы не можете прочитать этот буклет на английском языке потому что не является первым языке, пожалуйста, попросите кого-нибудь, кто говорит на английском языке для телефонного (PALS 01983 534850) для получения дополнительной информации и помощи

Turkish:

Eğer İngilizce ana diliniz değilse, çünkü bu broşürü okumak için yapamıyorsanız, daha fazla bilgi için 01983 534850 üzerinde PALS telefon İngilizce bilen birine sormak ve yardım lütfen

Bulgarian:

Ако не сте в състояние да прочетете тази листовка, тъй като английският не е първи език, опитайте някой, който говори английски, за да телефонирам (PALS на 01983 534850) за повече информация и помощ

Czech:

Pokud nejste schopni přečíst tuto příbalovou informaci, protože angličtina není vaším rodným jazykem, zeptejte se někoho, kdo mluví anglicky na telefonní PALS na 01983 534850 pro další informace a pomoc

Bengali:

আপনি ইংরেজি আপনার প্রথম ভাষা না থাকার কারণে এই লফিলটে পড়তে অক্ষম হন, তাহলে আরও তথ্যের জন্য 01983 534850 নভেগিশেন PALS টলেফি এন ইংরেজি কথা কটে জিজ্ঞাসা করুন এবং সাহায্য করুন

Introduction

Being told that your baby has died or has a condition that is not compatible for life outside the womb is devastating. The grief experienced by parents, and by close relatives and friends, is also extremely distressing. You and your family will be given considerable support by your midwives and doctors; however, it can be hard to take in all the information given to you at this time and therefore it is often helpful to have it in writing as well.

This leaflet helps to explain the care you will receive during and after the birth of your baby, and care in future pregnancies. It does not cover everything related to the longer-term emotional support you may need. Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity, offers support to anyone affected by the death of a baby before, during or shortly after birth. If at any time you feel uncertain about anything, the healthcare professionals looking after you will be there to help.

Why does it happen?

This is the question that every parent wishes to have answered and it is not always possible to give an answer. The most common reasons are abnormal development of the baby and infection. You and your partner will be offered tests to try to find out why your baby died (see below).

What happens next?

Experienced doctors and midwives will talk to you and your partner about the death of your baby or your baby's condition if it is already known. They will explain your choices for birth, and the various tests that may be offered.

You and your partner will be given support and plenty of time to make any decisions you need to make.

What are my choices for birth?

Your doctor will discuss with you and your partner the different options of when and how to have your baby. The advice will depend on your general health, your pregnancy and any previous birth experiences, and also your personal wishes. You will be looked after by an experienced midwife and, where possible, you will be cared for in an individual room that has facilities for your partner or another companion to stay with you.

Inducing labour (starting labour with medication)

You may choose to have labour induced as soon as possible after confirmation of the baby's condition or your baby's death or you may prefer to go home for a short while before treatment. Some women find it comforting to spend some time at home. There are different ways of inducing labour and your doctor will discuss with you which method would be the most appropriate for you. Often, a tablet is given by mouth 48 hours before admission for induction.

Your midwife or doctor will give you a contact number to ring if you have any queries or concerns while waiting for labour to start. You must ring your maternity unit if you have pain, bleeding or a smelly vaginal discharge, or if you feel unwell in any way.

How will I give birth to my baby?

Vaginal birth is usually recommended. Although you may find the thought of a vaginal birth distressing, you may want to consider that:

- there are fewer risks to you
- you will be able to go home more quickly
- your recovery is likely to be quicker and more straightforward future pregnancies are less likely to have complications.

Your doctor and midwife will discuss your choices with you and your wishes will be respected. All types of pain relief will usually be available in labour. An epidural may not be possible if you have an infection or problems with blood clotting but all steps will be taken to ensure that you get the pain relief you need.

What happens when my baby is born?

You will be given additional support by the midwives and doctors looking after you, who know that giving birth is going to be a distressing experience for you and your family. You and your partner (and sometimes other members of your family, with your permission) may wish to see and/or hold your baby immediately after birth. You may like to wait to see your baby until a little later after birth. You may decide not to see your baby at all.

If you wish to see and hold your baby, then you will have the opportunity to spend as much time as you need with your baby. A cold cot is also available to keep your baby's body cool and allows you and your family to spend a longer period of time with your baby following birth.

Some parents decide to take their baby home from the hospital for a short time. This can give you the opportunity to spend time with your baby quietly and privately. You will also be able to take the cold cot home with you. You may be able to take your baby straight home with you but if a post-

mortem is required you will not be able to take your baby home until after this. You can arrange to bring your baby home after the post-mortem by contacting the bereavement support midwives.

Mementoes such as photographs and hand and footprints can be taken where possible, and these are often valued by parents. A memory box will also be offered to enable you to take home if you wish. If you choose not to take these home with you straight away or if you are not sure about whether you would like to keep them, they can usually be kept securely in your hospital records and you can then have them at a later date if you wish. It will be your choice as to what you would like to do.

What happens after my baby has been born?

Staff in the Maternity Unit may have already talked to you about what happens to your baby and, although you might find it upsetting to think about at the moment, many parents begin to have thoughts and questions about what will happen to their baby's body once they leave the Hospital.

The following information addresses those questions. If you do not feel able to read this at the moment, please consider keeping this leaflet in case you want to refer to it at a later date, or ask someone close to you to read it. We would like to assure you that your baby is treated with care and respect at all times.

Following your discharge home your baby will be transferred to the Hospital Mortuary. You may wish to return to the Hospital to see your baby again and this can be organised by informing the midwives or contacting the Hospital mortuary

to arrange seeing your baby in the Chapel of Rest.

When a baby dies before 24 weeks of pregnancy there is no legal requirement to register the baby and therefore no legal certification will be issued to you. The Maternity Unit is able to provide you with a certificate of birth which gives details such as the date of delivery and the weight of your baby. Please inform the Midwifery staff if this is something that you would like to have.

If your baby does have a faint heart beat or takes some small gasps at delivery then it is a legal requirement to register both your baby's birth and death, a member of the midwifery staff will be able to support and advise you with this.

There are several options available to you regarding your baby's funeral.

St Marys offer a simple burial service for all babies who have died before 24 weeks of pregnancy. This is called the Born too soon service and is held on the first Wednesday of February, June and October at the Isle of Wight Crematorium. All of the babies that are born too soon share one casket and are buried together in the Baby Garden which is situated at the back of the Crematorium. There is no cost to you for this service and your attendance at this service is entirely optional. If you do decide to attend then a member of the Midwifery staff will be there to support you as you require.

You may wish to opt out of the Born too soon service and choose to make your own private funeral arrangements such as burial within a different location or a cremation. These options may incur a fee to yourselves and can be discussed further with your preferred Funeral Director. Again, please

ask a member of the Midwifery Team if you require further details to help you with these arrangements.

What happens next?

You will receive a telephone call from a midwife the day after you return home. This is to make sure you are well physically and to see if you would like to have a home visit and /or if there is anything else that you need.

You will also be sent an appointment to see a Consultant Obstetrician. This appointment is an opportunity to discuss all the events surrounding your baby's death and to review the results of the tests that were performed prior to and after your delivery. Typically, this appointment is arranged for 6 weeks after you leave the hospital but can be up to 12 weeks depending on the tests and investigations that have been performed.

If you require any further support or information please do not hesitate to contact the midwives at the Maternity Unit by calling 534349/534392.

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If you have any queries or concerns about the content of this leaflet please call (01983) 524081 and ask to speak to the relevant department.

If you require this leaflet in another language, large print or another format, please contact the PALS Team, telephone **01983 534850**, who will advise you.

Valuables should not be brought into the hospital. If patients have to bring in valuable items they should ask a nurse to store them safely and request a receipt for the items. You may not be able to have the valuable items returned if the time of discharge from hospital is out of hours.

We are sorry but the Trust cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to items not given for safe keeping.

You can get further information on all sorts of health issues online at: **www.nhs.uk**

For Health advice and out of hours GP service please call the NHS 111 service on: **111**

We Value Your Views On Our Service

If you wish to comment on the care which you, your relative or friend has received, we will be pleased to hear from you. Please speak to the person in charge of the ward, clinic or service in the first instance or ask them to contact the PALS Team. If you wish to contact them directly, telephone on **01983 534850**.

Alternatively you may prefer to write to:

Chief Executive
Isle Of Wight NHS Trust
St Mary's Hospital
Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5TG

You can also share any concerns you have about our services with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on **03000 61 61 61** or at **enquiries@cqc.org.uk**

All NHS sites are no smoking areas.

If you would like help and advice to stop smoking please call: Freephone 0800 169 0 169 to talk to the NHS Smoking Helpline.