

## **Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust**

### **Disposal of pregnancy remains following miscarriage at home Information Leaflet**

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The Honeysuckle Team are the dedicated baby bereavement team at Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust. We are very sorry for your loss; please accept our sincere condolences at this very sad time.

We have designed this leaflet to ensure you are aware of the options available to you following a miscarriage at home at less than 12 weeks gestation. We hope it will answer some of your questions.

#### **Options for disposal at home**

If you miscarry at home you are very likely to pass the remains of your pregnancy into the toilet. You may look at what has come away and see a pregnancy sac and/or a very early baby (we call this a fetus) – or something you think might be a fetus. If you complete your miscarriage at home you have no obligation to dispose of the pregnancy remains in any particular way. You might want to simply flush the toilet – many people do that automatically. If you prefer to dispose of the remains the way you normally dispose of sanitary waste this is a personal choice and there are no regulations to prevent you doing whatever feels right for you.

Or you may want to remove the remains for a closer look. That's natural too.

If you know that you do not want to flush the remains of your pregnancy you may wish to place a bowl into the toilet.

Some women and families may prefer to bury the pregnancy remains in the garden in a pot with flowers or a shrub.

Burial in a garden or other private land is not unlawful, provided that the person carrying out the burial owns the freehold or has obtained consent from the owner of the freehold. More advice on the burial of pregnancy remains at home can be obtained from the ICCM. <https://www.iccm-uk.com>

The Natural Death Centre's guide on home burial covers information on essential regulations that should be followed, planning permission, the role of the local authority and grave digging. <http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk/index.php?page=home-burial>

## Communal Cremation

An alternative option would be for the hospital to arrange a communal cremation.

A communal cremation is where the remains of 12 babies are cremated together at Springwood Crematorium, Springwood Avenue, Liverpool, the ashes are scattered within the crematorium's grounds in a special remembrance garden for babies and children. If you would like to know more about this option please contact The Honeysuckle Team.

If this is your preferred choice then please advise staff from Gynaecology Emergency Department who will make arrangements for your pregnancy remains / baby to come into the care of The Honeysuckle Team.

Once your pregnancy remains/ baby are in the care of The Honeysuckle Team we will then make arrangements for the communal cremation. Unfortunately you are not able to attend the communal cremation.

Please rest assured your pregnancy remains, baby will be looked after and that the communal cremation is carried out in a dignified and respectful manner.

Should you choose this option; the nurse caring for you will ask you to complete a consent form.

## Arranging burial or cremation via a funeral director

Some families decide that they want to honour their baby's memory by arranging a burial or cremation. It is possible to have a funeral for a baby born at any stage of pregnancy.

The hospital does not arrange individual funerals, therefore you will need to approach and appoint a local funeral director. Most funeral directors in the local area do not charge any fees when making arrangements for a baby or child's funeral – please ask when you are speaking with the funeral director.

Due to the current situation there will be limits as to what type of service can be held and who can attend.

The cemetery or crematorium where the burial or cremation is to take place will require confirmation (either a certificate or letter) that the miscarriage occurred at less than 24 weeks gestation. Therefore, you will need to obtain a certificate or letter from the hospital, please contact Gynaecology Emergency Department for them to arrange.

**During these extremely challenging times the transmission of the coronavirus at funeral gatherings cannot be overlooked. You are also requested to consider that funeral directors are currently extremely busy and you might face long delays in organising a funeral for your baby.**

Should you wish to discuss the options further please contact The Honeysuckle Team during their office hours Monday – Friday 8am-4pm via **0151 702 4151** or email [honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk)

## Helpful organisations

**Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust Gynaecology Emergency Department** – 0151 702 4140

**Liverpool Bereavement Services** – provides counselling support in Liverpool for under 20 weeks gestation - [0151 236 3932](tel:01512363932) / [enquiries@liverpoolbereavement.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@liverpoolbereavement.co.uk)

**Children of Jannah** – Organisation providing support to Muslim families after the loss of a baby or child <https://childrenofjannah.com/how-we-can-help/>

**The Miscarriage Association** – National organisation offering support and information for individuals affected by pregnancy loss. 01924 200 799 / [info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk)

**Little Things and Co** – Baby Bereavement Charity, this has lots of downloadable leaflets on various topics for all members of the family. <http://www.ltandco.org/>

**Muslim Bereavement Support Service** – Provides support and information to Muslim families following a bereavement 020 3468 7333 / [info@mbss.org.uk](mailto:info@mbss.org.uk)

**Samaritans** – Offers confidential support, available 24 hours a day to people who need to talk. Telephone 116 123 / <https://www.samaritans.org/>

**Human Tissue Authority** - The regulator for human tissue and organs <https://www.hta.gov.uk/faqs/disposal-pregnancy-remains>

This leaflet can be made available in difference formats on request. If you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at [pals@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@lwh.nhs.uk)