

## Care and Support for Baby Loss before 12 weeks – including testing, options for care of pregnancy remains, memory making and ongoing support

### Introduction

If you have had a miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or molar pregnancy or you are worried that this may happen, it can be really important to have good, clear, accurate information. It can also help family, friends and colleagues.

This leaflet discusses care and support for baby loss under 12 weeks. If your pregnancy loss occurred between 12 and 24 weeks of pregnancy please read leaflet [care-and-support-for-baby-loss-before-24-weeks.pdf](https://liverpoolwomens.nhs.uk/care-and-support-for-baby-loss-before-24-weeks.pdf) ([liverpoolwomens.nhs.uk](https://liverpoolwomens.nhs.uk))

We also encourage you to access the following leaflets

The Miscarriage Association [The Miscarriage Association: Pregnancy Loss Information & Support](https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/information-and-support/) who offer a wide range of support and resources including a range of leaflets about the facts and feelings of miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy and molar pregnancy. They also provide information on other useful publications and organisations.

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists have produced the following leaflets that provide information on early miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy, the physical process, tests and investigations, the physical impact, the emotional impact and considering another pregnancy:

For early miscarriage - [pi-early-miscarriage.pdf](https://www.rcog.org.uk/patient-information/early-miscarriage) ([rcog.org.uk](https://www.rcog.org.uk))

For ectopic pregnancy - [pi-ectopic-pregnancy-mar20.pdf](https://www.rcog.org.uk/patient-information/ectopic-pregnancy) ([rcog.org.uk](https://www.rcog.org.uk))

For molar pregnancy - [Molar pregnancy and gestational trophoblastic disease \(GTD\) patient information](https://www.rcog.org.uk/patient-information/molar-pregnancy) ([rcog.org.uk](https://www.rcog.org.uk))

The Honeysuckle Team are the dedicated baby bereavement team at Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust. The team consists of 2 bereavement specialist midwives, Marie Kelleher and Pauline McBurnie, and a bereavement support officer, Sarah Martin. We are very sorry for your loss; please accept our sincere condolences.

We have designed this booklet to ensure that you and your family are fully aware of the choices available, and the formalities involved at this difficult time.

The Honeysuckle Team offer practical advice and guidance as well as ongoing emotional support, you can contact the team via telephone and email 0151 702 4151 / [honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk)

## **Histopathology Testing**

This section explains histopathology testing of pregnancy remains after early miscarriage (up to 12 weeks' gestation).

You have been asked to consider Histopathological examination of your pregnancy remains.

### **What Is Histopathology testing and why is it recommended?**

Histopathology is the microscopic examination of the appearance of cells and tissues in very fine detail to exclude any abnormalities.

Histopathology testing is advisable although not compulsory.

We need to examine your pregnancy remains to exclude a rare condition called Molar Pregnancy (Gestational Trophoblast Disease). This is a condition where pregnancy and placental tissue develop abnormally and this can be the cause for your miscarriage - the testing does not give reasons why a miscarriage has occurred nor will it determine gender.

There are two types of Molar Pregnancy:

1. A complete mole, where there's a mass of abnormal cells in the womb and no foetus develops or
2. A partial mole, where an abnormal foetus starts to form, but it cannot survive.

Molar Pregnancies can cause the pregnancy hormone in your body to be very high and you may still feel pregnant. If Molar Pregnancy is diagnosed when your pregnancy tissue is examined it allows staff to give you the most appropriate treatment and follow up care in future pregnancies.

Molar pregnancy is a very rare condition and we will only contact you if the examination identifies this condition, or if anything else is found that might affect you.

If you have opted for surgical management of your miscarriage we recommend sending the pregnancy remains for testing. If you have opted for medical management of your miscarriage the health professionals caring for you will check any remains you pass and discuss if they think histopathology testing is advisable with you.

The examination is carried out in the Histopathology Department at Liverpool University Foundation Trust.

### **Does This Examination Have To Be Performed?**

It is your decision whether or not to allow this examination.

Please be aware that results from histopathology examination rarely identify a cause for your miscarriage. We do not routinely contact you with the results unless they are abnormal and results can take up to 3 months to come through.

### **After Histopathology Examination**

When fetal tissue is identified microscopically, its presence is commented within the pathology report, but as this is embedded in a paraffin block and is part of the diagnostic record, this is not returned.

If no fetal tissue is identified Royal Liverpool University Hospital will make arrangements for respectful disposal of the remaining tissue according to their standard procedure.

When fetal tissue is identified during the examination this is returned to Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust. The Honeysuckle Team will ensure your pregnancy remains are cared for in accordance with your wishes.

Genetic testing on the pregnancy remains will only be offered if there was a known fetal abnormality or if this is your third or more miscarriage, which is in keeping with national guidelines.

### **Options for the care of pregnancy remains**

This information has been devised in accordance with Human Tissue Authority guidance. [https://www.hta.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Guidance\\_on\\_the\\_disposal\\_of\\_pregnancy\\_remains.pdf](https://www.hta.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Guidance_on_the_disposal_of_pregnancy_remains.pdf)

Please note when a pregnancy loss occurs under 12 weeks gestation and histopathology testing has been requested, if no fetal tissue is identified, Royal Liverpool University Hospital will make arrangements for respectful disposal of the remaining tissue according to their standard procedure.

There are 3 options you have to decide between following on from your loss.

### **Communal Cremation**

With your consent The Honeysuckle Team organise a communal cremation. A communal cremation is when 12 babies are cremated together at Springwood crematorium.

Following the cremation, the ashes are scattered in the baby garden of remembrance within the grounds of the crematorium.

Please note if you sign consent for communal cremation and wish to be provided with more information you must contact The Honeysuckle Team within 14 days.

Please be rest assured that your baby will be looked after and that the communal cremation is carried out in a dignified and respectful manner. Baby Remembrance Garden, Springwood Crematorium, Springwood Avenue, Allerton, L25 7UN.



### **Arranging burial or cremation via a funeral director**

It is possible to arrange an individual burial or cremation for a pregnancy loss at any stage of pregnancy - if you wish to do this you will need to appoint a local funeral director.

The Honeysuckle Team are able to provide you with advice and guidance on arranging a funeral and can make initial contact with funeral directors on your behalf if you wish. Most funeral directors in the local area do not charge any fees when making arrangements for a baby or child's funeral.

Please note if you sign consent to make arrangements with a funeral director you need to make your arrangements within 12 weeks. If you have not contacted a funeral director or The Honeysuckle Team within this time a communal cremation will take place in accordance with Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust procedures.

### **Taking pregnancy remains home from the hospital**

You can take your pregnancy remains home with you to bury in a planter with flowers or a plant in the garden; this is a personal choice and there are no regulations to prevent you doing whatever feels right for you.

If you decide to do this, there are certain requirements that need to be met. It is advisable to think carefully about what you will do with your pregnancy remains/baby and consider any associated restrictions which might exist, for example in relation to burial on a home property. For further guidance please visit

<https://www.fdean.gov.uk/media/a0omqwzz/guidance-for-burials-on-private-land.pdf> The

Environment Agency is also a good source of advice on this matter. Environment Agency - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

If you would like to discuss these options in more detail, please contact The Honeysuckle Team for support please call or email the team - 0151 702 4151 / [honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk)

If you do not make a decision or do not contact The Honeysuckle Team to confirm your decision the team will attempt to contact you. If the team are not able to reach you within 12 weeks they will make arrangements for communal cremation in accordance with Human Tissue Authority (HTA) guidance and local hospital procedure.

## **Making Memories**

The Honeysuckle Team are passionate about promoting positive memories for bereaved families.

Your nurse will support your choices for memory making. There is no official registration for a miscarriage. Acknowledgment of life certificates are available for anyone who experiences a pregnancy loss under 24 weeks. These are provided in the memory boxes. If this is something you would like please ask the nurse caring for you who can provide this, alternatively should you wish to make your own you can download a template from SANDS website [www.sands.org.uk](http://www.sands.org.uk)

A Government scheme designed to recognise the grief of parents who have experienced a loss of pregnancy before 24 weeks has been launched, you can get a certificate in memory of your baby.

It's free to get a certificate. You do not need to request a certificate if you prefer not to. It's optional. The certificate is not a legal document - for example you cannot use it to claim benefits. The certificate will not be added to your GP record. Should you wish to request a baby loss certificate please follow: [Request a baby loss certificate - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

## **Naming Your Baby**

Some parents decide to give their baby a name, as this gives them their own identity and can make it easy to talk about them. Some parents use a nickname they may have chosen during their pregnancy. You do not have to name your baby if this does not feel right for you.

## **Memory Box**

Your nurse should offer you a memory box, if you have not been given one, please ask the staff looking after you. The box is a special place for keepsakes this could include a scan picture, or any cards that you might receive. A memory box can help you acknowledge your grief and talk about your loss with family and friends.

## **Blessing**

A blessing can be arranged with the hospital's on call chaplaincy team who would usually provide this service. Ask your nurse or midwife to make contact with the chaplaincy team.

If the chaplaincy team are not available another staff member at the hospital can conduct a blessing on their behalf – your nurse will support you with this. You may wish to record or stream this for family and friends to watch.

### **Memorial Book**

There is a book of remembrance located in the chapel at LWH. If you would like your baby's name to be added to the book please email [Christine.dickinson@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:Christine.dickinson@lwh.nhs.uk) with the following details baby/babies name, the date that you delivered.

### **Memorial Garden**

There is a garden dedicated to our honeysuckle families. You are welcome to visit the garden at any time and can access from the main reception of the hospital. Within the garden there is a metal love lock tree. You may wish to purchase a padlock with your baby's name or a small message inscribed to hang on the tree. If you would like to order a lock please visit Ladybugs Picnic Wirral - <https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/LadybugsPicnicWirral>

### **Support for you and your family**

The Honeysuckle Team run ongoing support sessions and events. For up to date information regarding Honeysuckle ongoing support please visit Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust website [Honeysuckle Bereavement Service - Liverpool Womens NHS Foundation Trust](#) Alternatively, if you would like to be added to our mailing list please email your details to [honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk) and we can ensure you are invited and advised of all future events.

Monthly support group - group sessions take place in a calm, welcoming environment with refreshments, crafts and a listening ear. The meetings are for adults only, due to the sensitive nature of the group children cannot attend.

Women's Walking Group – In partnership with Liverpool Football Club Foundation, The Honeysuckle Team have set up a monthly walking group for women. The group is a safe space for women to come together to discuss issues that matter to you, learn different coping strategies, get advice from other women affected by baby loss, get active and keep fit.

Support for Men - In partnership with Liverpool Football Club Foundation, The Honeysuckle Team have set up a support group for men. Honeysuckle FC offers men a safe space to come together for an hour social and wellbeing session followed by an hour football session.

The Honeysuckle Team organise an annual remembrance service in October during Baby Loss Awareness Week, 9<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> October <https://babyloss-awareness.org/> for all families to remember their babies. Attending remembrance events can be a helpful part of your grief journey. Sharing this time with other families might help you feel less isolated in your grief. We publish details of our service on Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust website and social media pages.

Honeysuckle support sessions and events are funded through Liverpool Women's Charity. We would like to thank all those who have donated to help make these events possible. Ongoing support for families can have such a positive impact on their difficult journey. If you would like to support The Honeysuckle Team in continuing to provide these services please contact Liverpool Women's Fundraising Team - [Liverpool Women's Hospital Charity - Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust](#)

### **Unsubscribe to Bounty communications**

If you are sadly affected by miscarriage or baby loss Bounty can update your details for you. Please email [privacy@bounty.com](mailto:privacy@bounty.com) and they will update your membership details to ensure that you no longer receive any communications from them or their partners.

### **Helpful organisations**

There are lots of organisations The Honeysuckle Team work with who can offer you and your family support:

Liverpool Bereavement Services – provides counselling support in Liverpool 0151 236 3932 / <https://liverpoolbereavement.com/>

Antenatal Results and Choices ( ARC ) – Offers information and support for parents making decisions around antenatal testing, including when a baby has a significant anomaly. <https://www.arc-uk.org/>

Child Bereavement UK National organisation providing support to families when a baby or child has died and offers support for children faced with bereavement. 0800 028 8840 / <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>

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 Compassionate Friends – Organisation of bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents that offer support to other after the death of a child. [www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust – Provides support and information for people who have had or been affected by an ectopic pregnancy. 020 7733 2653 / <https://ectopic.org.uk/>

Fertility Network UK – Provides support to people dealing with infertility and/or who are facing involuntary childlessness. [www.fertilitynetworkuk.org](http://www.fertilitynetworkuk.org)

The Miscarriage Association – National organisation offering support and information for individuals affected by pregnancy loss. 01924 200 799 / <https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/>

Multiple Births Foundation (MBF) – Provides support and information for multiple birth families, including bereavement support. [www.multiplebirths.org.uk](http://www.multiplebirths.org.uk)

Muslim Bereavement Support Service – Provides support and information to Muslim families following a bereavement 020 3468 7333 / <http://mbss.org.uk/>



Sakoon – Provides an Islamic perspective in counselling for Muslims Islamic counselling, Muslim counselling - Incorporate Islam in Counselling (sakoon.co.uk)

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

Twins Trust – offers support to families who have lost one or more children from a multiple birth. Twins Trust | Bereavement Service / [bereavementsupport@twinstrust.org](mailto:bereavementsupport@twinstrust.org)

Should you wish to contact The Honeysuckle Team to discuss anything further, please contact us by telephone 0151 702 4151 or email [honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk) – office hours are Monday – Friday 08:00 – 16:00.

**This leaflet can be changed into different languages and formats using the tools on the website. Please note when translating information into different languages via the website, some information may need clarifying for accuracy with a member of staff. This leaflet can be formally translated on request via our Patient Experience Team, although response times to have information translated can vary. To request formal translation services or if you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at [pals@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@lwh.nhs.uk)**

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