

If You Have Learned Your Baby Has Died... Helping You through the Process

If your baby has died in-utero:

SLOW DOWN, there is no rush (unless medically necessary).

- Call a family member or close friend and have them make calls, letting others know that your baby has passed away.
- Look for a bereavement doula in your area that might be able to lend support to you and your family during the birth process.
- Request a room at the end of the maternity ward or on another floor to ensure a quiet space.
- Ask the nurses to give you a description of what your baby will look like after he or she is born, so you can be aware of any changes in your baby's skin. There will be no responsiveness or crying, and the lips will appear red. Your baby's body will become cooler and start to stiffen over a short amount of time.
- Plan to take photographs of your baby. You will cherish these photographs for the rest of your life and only have this one opportunity to capture these images. You can take the photos yourself or call a bereavement photographer, i.e., [Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep](#) (NILMDTS) 720-283-3339. NILMDTS offers free volunteer photographers on call at all times.

After your baby is born we recommend you consider:

- Naming your baby
- Having skin-to-skin contact with your baby
- Rocking, holding, kissing, and cuddling your baby
- Bathing your baby
- Putting a diaper and clothes on your baby
- Singing and reading a book to your baby
- Asking hospital staff for a lock of hair from your baby
- Taking photographs of and with your baby

You can request a religious service or ceremony in the hospital (i.e. baptism or blessing)

You also have the legal option to take your baby home for a home memorial/funeral should you desire it. If you do this, keep ice packs around and under the infant's body at home. This can still be done if you ask for an autopsy.

After you leave the hospital we recommend you consider:

- Asking for someone to arrange meal delivery for when you get home.
- Deciding whether you would like to suppress or donate your breast milk. You may want to contact lactation consultant.
- Creating an online memorial on Facebook, Caring Bridge, or World of Remembrance to share pictures, your grief, and create community

- Planning a memorial service
- Sending out Born Still announcements
- Fill out application for Certified Copy of Still Birth or Fetal Death Record
- Asking your hospital for a stop-junk-mail form, so companies with baby products don't send you mail (i.e. formula, etc.)
- Seek a support group

If your baby will be born alive but is not expected to live:

- SLOW DOWN...re-read this guide as many of the suggestions may pertain to your situation.
- Ask the nurses to describe what you may see or hear during your baby's dying process so that you are not feeling fearful. For example, your baby's breathing pattern will change.
- Ask if you can hold your baby while he or she passes. You may ask for privacy during this time.
- Hearing is the last of the senses to go, so sing, play music, read, or speak to your baby during this time. You will always be your baby's mother and father.
- You may want to consider organ donation.