

Losing a Multiple

For families who have experienced the death of a twin or other baby who was part of a multiple pregnancy

We are deeply sorry for your loss. **Please know you are not alone.** The death of one of your babies brings about a complex grief, with a mixture of joy because you have a living baby(s) and, at the same time, deep sadness because one or more of your babies died. We hope this guide will be helpful as you grieve.

What Can Be Helpful

- Talk about and include your baby(s) who died, even though this may make some people feel uncomfortable.
- Attend a pregnancy and infant loss support group to connect with other parents who have experienced a similar loss.
- Carve out special time to grieve for your baby(s) who died, just as you allow time for joy with your living baby(s).
- Set aside time devoted to your relationship with your partner. Seek out couples counseling to understand how you can best support each other through the grieving process.
- Consider grief counseling for yourself.

Common Feelings

- Feeling overwhelmed due to dealing with the death of your baby(s) all while caring for a newborn
- Excitement about experiencing your living baby(s) grow and change, as well as sadness, because you should have these experiences with your baby(s) who died
- Guilt for feeling joy for your living child
- Confusion due to your conflicted feelings

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The Living Baby(s)

- Plan to tell your child(ren) about their twin/multiple who died and share this as central to their birth story. They need to hear this information from you.
- Share the baby's memory box with your surviving baby(s) when you feel the timing is appropriate.
- Your child(ren) may feel guilty for surviving and will need your constant assurance and love.
- As your child(ren) grows older, allow and encourage questions, and accept and acknowledge their feelings.
- Anniversary dates, birthdays, and milestones will be bittersweet, as one of your children will always be missing. Sharing your sadness and joy as these milestones occur will keep the memory alive of your baby(s).

Friends and Family

You are likely to find that some of your friends and family members will feel more comfortable ignoring the baby(s) who died and concentrating on the living baby(s), expecting you to do the same.

The following are suggestions that may help:

- Ask a close friend or family member to explain to your loved ones that you are experiencing complex feelings right now—both profound grief and immense joy.
- As time passes, your openness about your baby(s) should help family and friends to feel less uncomfortable acknowledging your baby(s) who died.

If Your Living Baby(s) Is in the NICU

You may:

- experience overwhelming fear and anxiety.
- find the emotional toll of having your baby(s) in the NICU to be an exceptional challenge.
- have difficulty relating to other NICU parents.
- find it unbearable to be in the NICU if your baby(s) that died passed away in the NICU.

What Can Help

- Give yourself permission to heal physically from the pregnancy and delivery.
- Ask for help from family members in visiting your baby(s) in the NICU so that you can take time to grieve and heal.
- Learn from other families how to manage life in the NICU.
- Ask your primary NICU nurse to make sure the staff is aware of your loss.
- Join a NICU support group, if your hospital offers one.
- Create an online support system via CaringBridge or Facebook to share your journey and easily update loved ones without having to send individual messages.

Ways to Honor Your Baby(s)

- If you send out a birth announcement, include your baby(s) that died.
- If you have a dedication, baptism, or christening ceremony, you may want to acknowledge your baby(s) that died at this ceremony.
- On your twin or multiple's birthday, you may want to do something special to honor your baby(s) each year.
- As time passes, it can be healing to become involved in local pregnancy and infant loss organizations and events.
- Friends and family want you to feel their support. Identify ways for them to honor your baby(s) that died (e.g., donations to organizations supporting pregnancy or infant loss, a nonprofit in your local community, or a place that has special meaning to your family).

Siblings and Grief

Navigating grief with children whose sibling has died can be overwhelming. However much you're able, try to keep lines of communication open as you and your living baby(s) grow and grieve together.

For more information on how to support them through their grief of the sibling(s) they lost, visit rtzhope.org/parents.



For more information, resources, and support, scan or visit Janesroom.org.

