

When Your Baby Has Died

Guiding you through grief

We are deeply sorry for your loss. There is not any one, perfect way to walk through this process, nor is there much anyone can do to prepare for such a heartbreak. We want you to know you are not alone.

Other parents in your situation have contributed to this guide, developed to give examples of actions you might consider at this time. We hope it will make the only moments with your child beautiful, peaceful, and without regret.

If Your Baby Has Died in Utero

Slow down, there is no rush (unless medically necessary).

- Ask a family member or close friend to make calls to notify others that your baby has passed away.
- Request a room at the end of Labor and Delivery or on another floor to ensure a quiet space.
- Ask the nurses to describe what your baby will look like after they are born.
- You may also use a bereavement doula to support you during the birth process.

After Your Baby Is Born

We recommend:

- 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, playing music, or reading a book to your baby.
- asking hospital staff for a lock of hair from your baby.
- making hand and footprints.

- taking photographs with your baby. This is your one opportunity to capture images you will cherish for the rest of your life. We recommend nowilaymedowntosleep.org or a local volunteer bereavement photographer through your hospital.
- requesting a religious service or ceremony in the hospital (e.g., baptism), if applicable.
- asking for a comfort cot or ice packs so you can prolong your time with your precious child.
- looking into the legal option to take your baby home for a home memorial/funeral should you desire it, even if you ask for an autopsy. If you do this, keep ice packs around and under the infant's body at home.

If Your Baby Will Be Born Alive But Is Not Expected to Live

In addition to the previous suggestions, the following may be helpful.

- What are the final wishes you have for your baby? Would you like to take your baby outside in the sunshine, moonlight, or garden?
- Ask the nurses to describe what you may see or hear during your baby's dying process.
- Request a private and peaceful space.
- You may hold your baby as they pass.

After You Leave the Hospital

We recommend:

- asking for someone to arrange meal delivery for when you get home.
- contacting a lactation consultant to help you decide whether you would like to suppress or donate your breast milk.
- creating an online memorial via CaringBridge or Facebook to share your loss journey and create community.
- planning a memorial service.
- sending out Born Still announcements.
- checking if your state offers a Certified Copy of Still Birth or Fetal Death Record.
- seeking a perinatal bereavement mental health provider or support group in person and/or online.



For more information,
resources, and support,
scan or visit [Janesroom.org](https://janesroom.org).

