



For UK families experiencing early pregnancy loss

The examinations you could expect if you experience pregnancy loss or the death of a baby before 22 weeks of pregnancy

Saving babies' lives.
Supporting bereaved families.

Our vision is for a world where fewer babies die and when a baby does die, anyone affected receives the best possible care and support for as long as it is needed.

This guide is designed to help you understand the examinations that may happen following a pregnancy loss or the death of a baby before 22 weeks of gestation which may help you understand why your baby died



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Placental examination

You may be offered an examination of the placenta (also called placental histology). The placenta connects you to your baby in the womb. Examining the placenta may help explain why your baby died.

Placental exams are optional. Staff at the hospital can answer any questions about a placental exam and how long it should take.

Getting your results

In most cases, you will be given a hospital appointment to discuss the results of your placental exam. During your hospital appointment to discuss your placental examination results, your consultant will help you understand what the results mean and will explain anything in the report that you don't understand. They should also be able to tell you if they have found anything that could possibly impact on future pregnancies.

Hospital Post-mortem

A hospital post-mortem is an examination of your baby's body to help understand why they died.

A senior member of hospital staff who is trained in post-mortems will explain the different types of post-mortems and will ask which type you agree to for your baby. This is called post-mortem consent.

You can ask any questions you want to, to make sure you make the right decision for you. Hospital post-mortems are optional. It is entirely your decision whether your baby has one.

Getting your results

It may take several weeks or months to get the post-mortem results. The time it takes varies from hospital to hospital. The person speaking with you about post-mortem consent can answer any questions about how long it may take.

The post-mortem report is likely to be very technical and contain medical language which you might find distressing, or hard to understand. You should be offered an appointment with a senior member of staff who will go through the report and explain it to you. If you do not receive a copy of the report, you can ask for one. Unfortunately, a post-mortem might not always tell you why your baby died.

Recurrent miscarriage

If you have experienced three or more early pregnancy losses, your GP can refer you to a specialist clinic to try and find out why.



Sands is here for anyone affected by pregnancy loss or the death of a baby.

If you need support, Sands offers confidential trauma-informed support for anyone affected by pregnancy loss or the death of a baby in the UK

Saving babies' lives.
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Free helpline 0808 164 3332



Email helpline@sands.org.uk



Sands support chat via our website sands.org.uk