

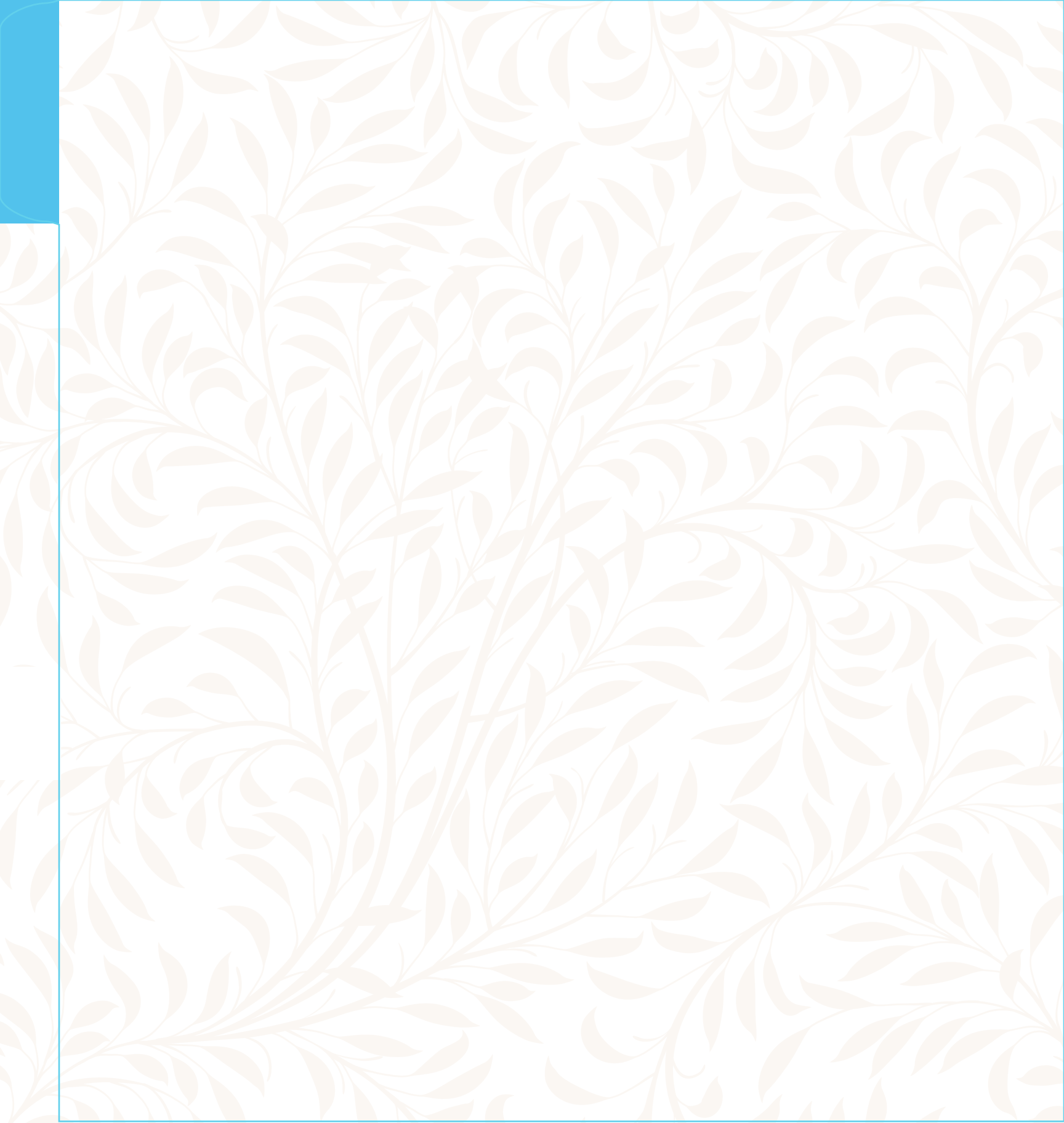
After Your Loss



Neonatal Loss

At the Time of Your Loss

- About Neonatal Loss
- Care for your Baby
- Creating Memories
- Mom's Physical Health
- Your Emotions



After the loss of your Newborn

The loss of a newborn baby may have a lasting impact on you. Each parent or family member will experience this loss in a unique way. For some, it may be an overwhelming time with much sadness, while for others; it may feel easier to cope. There is no right or wrong way to feel or experience this time of loss. We want to honour each individual journey.

We are very sorry for this time of loss for you and your family. We hope this guide can help you with needed information and support through the days and weeks ahead. We want you to know you are not alone and support is available to you and your family.

While we often refer to couples in this guide, we acknowledge that you may be a single person facing the loss. In addition, we acknowledge alternative family structures where gender specific titles, such as mother and father, may not apply. We offer you our warm thoughts and support.



Pregnancy and Infant Loss Program Calgary Zone
(403-944-8835) Alberta Health Services

This resource guide for families was made possible by a generous Calgary Health Foundation donation from a caring family like yours.

This guide and its content are designed for information purposes only. It should not be used in place of medical advice, information and/or treatment. If you have specific questions, please consult your doctor, appropriate health care professional, or contact [Health Link Alberta](#) at Phone number 811.

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Parent Checklist

These steps below are options for you and your family to consider after the loss of your baby.

- Choose a name for your baby.
- Gather important photos and mementos for memories of your baby.
- Let the health care team know your wishes about autopsy for your baby,
- If your baby is going for an autopsy, will a funeral home be picking up your baby, or will you?
- Find out where you/funeral home would pick up your baby.
- Choose a funeral service provider for funeral arrangements.
- Make funeral or memorial service arrangements.
- Obtain a burial permit from the hospital if you wish to take your baby with you.
- Consider invitations to family or friends for a funeral or memorial service, or send a card to friends and family members acknowledging your baby's life.
- Consult Health Link Alberta at 811 or the Early Start Line (403-244-8351, 403-944-7200) for information on pain management, breast-milk, or other health concerns.
- Book an appointment with your doctor to review any autopsy results, lab reports, & follow-up health appointment.
- Arrange for rides to health appointments.
- Cancel any classes you may have (prenatal classes or before and after delivery classes)
- Notify your workplace about time away from work and complete any paperwork.
- Check your life insurance to see if there is coverage provided for the loss of your baby
- Look into your benefits plan for coverage or Employment Insurance benefits www.hrsdc.gc.ca
- Ask for help from family, as needed, to let others know of your loss.
- Keep a journal of your thoughts and feelings
- Call to schedule a counselling appointment
- Visit www.pregnancyloss.ca to for more resources, articles, links to blogs etc.
- Attend a parent support group
- Print your photos and place in a photo memory book.

At The Time of Your Loss

We understand that you will have a unique response to your loss – one normal for you. You may feel flooded with emotion, a sort of numbness or shock, or something in between. It will take time to absorb the reality of what has happened.

Our health care team is here to care for you and your baby with respect, to help you access resources, support, and to answer any questions you may have. We are concerned about both your physical and emotional health, and it is important you get all the information you need. There are no right or wrong questions or decisions at this time.

This guide may not be a fit for everyone. You may feel an overwhelming sense of loss. On the other hand, you may feel numb and it is possible you will develop feelings of loss later. It is never too late to explore your grief, access support, or find ways to remember your baby.

You may want to find a personal way to honour your baby. It may involve a ceremony, memorial, burial, or a private moment of remembering. Decisions may be difficult to make right now. It is important to take your time to make them.

You will be offered opportunities to create memories of your baby if you wish. For example, you may want to take photos of your baby, bring in a special item from home, and/or receive mementos such as a teddy bear or recognition of life certificate. Consider what memories of your baby would be important to you and your family.

Please let your health care provider know if you would like support from a social worker, spiritual care staff, aboriginal hospital liaison worker, or from a leader within your cultural or spiritual community. A spiritual care staff member can help facilitate any practices, rituals or connections with community leaders you may need at this time. You or your family members may also wish to visit a hospital chapel or a sacred space for spiritual support.

About Neonatal Loss

What is a neonatal loss?

A neonatal loss refers to a death of an infant born alive, or showing any signs of life regardless of gestational age or birth weight, in the first 28 days of life.

What are the risk factors for neonatal loss?

Risk factors and reasons for neonatal death may include:

- Infections (36%) includes sepsis/pneumonia, tetanus and diarrhea.
- Pre-term infant (28%)
- Birth asphyxia (23%)
- Birth defects presenting at birth
- Maternal illness such as Pre-eclampsia
- other causes

When you are told your baby is going to die or has died, it is important to have support persons with you such as your spouse, partner, parent or close friend. You may also want to ask for help from a social worker or spiritual care worker. It is important for you to know that many of the risk factors to neonatal death are not preventable. Guilt after a loss is a common feeling however, it is not warranted and could be a barrier to healing.

It may be difficult to take in medical information after your loss. Let your health provider know if you have questions after the loss. You may come back any time after the loss with questions or concerns.

***“I’ve never had this happen before.
I didn’t know it could happen to us.
What do we do now?”***

Loss in Multiple Pregnancy

Risk Factors Associated with Multiple Pregnancy

Risks to pregnancy increase with each additional baby carried in the uterus at the same time. Some of the risks include:

- pre-eclampsia
- gestational diabetes
- delivery of a pre-term baby
- birth defects


Loss of a newborn in a twin or multiple pregnancy

All parents who have bonded with their babies describe the loss of one or more babies in a multiple pregnancy as a 'bittersweet experience'. Each moment spent thinking about the healthy twin is also a reminder of the twin that has not survived. This can be very distressing for families. They have mixed feelings and regrets about not being able to see their babies together as they had pictured in their minds or seen through ultrasound pictures.

Purple Butterfly Program

If you have delivered in Calgary, you may see a purple butterfly image on the cribs or warmers. The purple butterfly logo signifies a neonatal loss from a twin or multiple pregnancy. This is an optional program that you may choose to participate in. The logo is from the Neonatal Research Network at www.neonatalresearch.net. This organization is dedicated to promoting neonatal research and improving outcomes for sick and preterm infants, and their parents.

The Purple Butterfly logo represents a baby that was part of a multiple pregnancy, but one of the babies did not survive and the parents have chosen that they wish to make others aware. Please see a sample of the poster and logo below.



Butterfly Logos

When visiting this Neonatal unit either as a partner, relative or friend please be aware of the butterfly logo which may be on some cribs or warmers.

This represents a baby that was part of a multiple pregnancy but sadly not all the babies survived and parents have chosen that they wish to make others aware.

Produced on behalf of
The Skye High Foundation



theskyehighfoundation@gmail.com

Care for your Baby

Babies can sometimes die after a very healthy pregnancy and normal labour. Parents often want answers and may want to blame themselves, but often there are no answers and no one is at fault.

During this time of shock and grief, your body requires time to recover from pregnancy and labour and emotionally you will need to recover from grief and loss. Please let your health care team know how to best support you and your family.

The hospital staff will provide you with information regarding options available to you for the care of your baby. The options you choose will depend upon your beliefs, preferences, and available resources.

What to expect

If you are still in hospital, your doctor or midwife will try to offer time for you to consider your options. The amount of time will depend on your primary caregiver's assessment of your health needs.

If the death of the newborn is expected, staff will help to provide you with privacy and confidentiality by offering you a bereavement room where available. The room is designed to help make your stay as comfortable and supportive as possible.

If the death was not expected, you may be quite shocked and may have trouble taking in information. Take your time to make decisions and write information down. We encourage you to have a support person with you.

You will be offered support from a team of health professionals. You may choose which services are most helpful for you. Your decisions and choices will be respected. You will have time with your baby. We encourage you to take as much time as you need to create memories which are meaningful to you and your family.

“Death ends a life, not a relationship”

- Morrie Schwartz

Care for Your Baby (Calgary)

Your health care professional will have a discussion with you about your wishes for your baby's body. Let your health provider know of your questions and concerns.

You will need to make plans for the care of your baby within one week of death. It is provincial law that when a baby is born alive and dies, that the baby receives appropriate burial or cremation (see Cemeteries Act, Alberta).

Ask your healthcare professional about Memorial services that are held in your area. In addition, there is a list of resources in the Memorial section at the end of this Guide.

“Precious little one, we had you in our lives such a very short time, but we’ll hold you in our hearts forever. It seemed like only a fleeting moment. It was long enough to see you, touch you, hold you, love you. It was long enough to know that your life was indeed a gift - no matter how brief, no matter how fragile, your life was indeed a gift and we’ll hold you in our hearts forever.” - Unknown



Funerals and Services

Unfortunately, some of the early discussions and decisions after the loss of your baby are around funerals and investigations such as autopsy. Each family will have unique wishes and requests for the care of their baby after a loss. The health care team will care for you and your baby respectfully. Our care is respectful of, recognizes, and supports cultural beliefs, values and practices.

Arrangements for the care of your baby's body need to be made. In most settings a family counselor or social worker will have a discussion with you about your wishes for your baby. Your baby will be in the morgue at the hospital where you delivered, unless you have chosen an autopsy for your baby. Or another option is to stay on the unit and the funeral home will pick up the baby from the unit. The baby would stay in a 'cuddle cot' on the unit until then.

You may have the option to take your baby home with you for a little while before having professional support with cremation or burial. Check with your health care team about your options. Services may vary by your location.

Let your health provider know if you have family customs or practices you would like honour or if you have any questions and concerns.

Autopsy

What is an Autopsy?

An autopsy is a surgical examination after death performed by a pathologist to determine the cause of death.

Considering Autopsy

Questions and concerns about the possible reasons for your baby's death are normal. You may choose to have an autopsy or some testing for your baby. If you chose to have an autopsy for your baby, you will be asked to sign a consent form. Completing an autopsy does not necessarily mean there will be answers as to why the loss occurred. Your doctor can help provide more information and answer any questions you may have.

While some families feel they would like as much information as possible, for other families, an autopsy does not feel right for them. Your personal feelings, values and beliefs are as important as finding the medical facts.

Take time for you and your partner to think about what is most important to you when making the decision regarding an autopsy of your baby. You can speak to a social worker or spiritual care staff to help you during this difficult time.

While completing an autopsy does not necessarily mean there will be answers as to why the death has occurred, knowing more about your baby may help you with the grieving process. Autopsy may also identify problems that could change the care and monitoring provided with a future pregnancy. Your doctor can help provide more information and may be able to answer additional questions you have.

Autopsy Options

Parents can request a “limited” or “complete” examination for their baby.

Complete Autopsy -A complete autopsy provides parents and health care providers with the most information. It includes an examination of the outside body parts, the internal organs, examining small samples of tissue under a microscope, taking x-rays, and taking medical photographs. In some cases, more samples may be taken, if you agree, for laboratory tests, such as genetic testing or infectious studies.

Limited Autopsy - It is recommended parents consider this option if they do not feel they can consent to a complete autopsy. In a limited autopsy, parents can decide what should be examined.

For example, they can request only the outside of the body is examined (“external examination”). This will usually also include photographs and x-rays of the body. The parents can also request any inside examination be limited to the chest or abdomen, or be limited to specific organs, for example heart and lungs. Or parents can limit the examination to taking only small samples (“biopsies”) of skin or internal organs.

In Calgary, autopsy is completed at the Alberta Children’s Hospital. For parents picking up their baby after autopsy call the Admitting Office at the Alberta Children’s Hospital Phone: 403-955-7212. A social worker will help to confirm your baby is ready for pick up, and will be present to support you. Otherwise, your baby will be held at the hospital where your baby was delivered.

Please be assured that your baby will always be treated with care and respect.

Creating Memories

This is your baby, and you have options for creating lasting memories. Give yourself time for you and your partner to go through this process. You have been a parent to your baby, and it is important to find ways to remember your baby. The creation of precious memories is an important part of this parenting and healing experience.

Please let your health care team know if you would like to have additional support from a social worker, spiritual care worker or you may wish to involve traditional cultural practices. A spiritual care staff member can assist you with religious rites that may be of importance to you, such as prayers, blessing, or dedication. They may also help to contact community leaders or aboriginal liaison services. Most hospitals have a quiet room or chapel you may visit.

You may choose to spend this precious time creating special memories, and consider religious ceremonies or rituals meaningful to you and your family. Some families have taken the time to dress or wrap their baby and read special stories to them. This is your time with your baby; do whatever feels right for you. Your health care team is available to help you with ideas or support to create memories with your baby.

Mementos

Mementos are offered by Pregnancy and Infant Loss Bereavement Programs as a way to remember your baby. These mementos are made possible through donations offered by families who have also experienced the loss of a baby.

Memento items offered to you may include:

- Recognition of Life certificate
- Baby hat or nightie
- Baby ID bracelet
- Lock of baby's hair
- Teddy bear
- Baby blanket
- Memory Box



Photo Memories

We encourage you to take photos of your baby if it feels comfortable for you. You may use your own camera/phone or a camera from the photo kit on the nursing unit. The kit has various props family can use as well as a photo book with ideas of possible photo's families might find helpful. Also there is a volunteer resource that many families find helpful (Now I lay me Down to Sleep (NILMDTS) who give the gift of a bereavement family portraiture to families suffering the loss of a baby. Your health team can make a contact for you.

Most families find both mementos and photos of their baby help with the grief process. You may take your own photos, or let your health provider know if you wish to have help with photos, and they can offer some ideas or support. Some families have shared with us that, at the time of the loss, they were not ready for photos. However, often later families wish they had taken photos. This is your time with your baby.

Photos are for you to keep as forever memories. You can always decide later in what ways you would like to use or keep them as memories. Please tell your health care team if photos are against your cultural values or beliefs as we respect your wishes.

Helpful Photo Tips:

- You may use either your own camera/personal device or, if you are on a nursing unit, you may use the unit camera.
- Use this opportunity to hold the baby and to take your own pictures.
- Ask to see/share items from the photo kit and photo book provided by the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Program for photo ideas.
- Create meaningful memories as a way of parenting your baby.
- Consider if you have a meaningful baby item to bring in for the photos.
- Take close-up photos of face, hands or feet and photos with family.
- In the case of a multiple loss, take pictures of the babies together as well as of each baby separately.
- Ensure photos include members of the family.
- Take several photos of each pose to ensure there are many to choose from. The more photos the better.



Mom's Physical Health

Remember your body is going through some major changes and needs time to heal and recover. Be gentle with yourself and allow time for rest and recovery. For a small percentage of women, very heavy bleeding or signs of infection may occur, and you may need to be treated by the emergency department.

When to seek help after you have gone home

After your baby's delivery, call your family doctor, obstetrician or visit an emergency department if:

- you experience bleeding much heavier than a regular menstrual period (soaking through a thick maxi pad each hour for more than 2 hours in a row);
- heavy bleeding continues for more than 1-2 weeks
- you pass blood clots bigger than a large coin;
- you have severe abdominal pain;
- you have a continued fever over 100.5°F or 38°C for more than 4 hours after taking acetaminophen (Tylenol); and/or
- you have discharge from the vagina that does not look normal or has a bad odour.

Symptoms you may experience include:

Vaginal Bleeding

Bleeding after delivery is expected. The amount of bleeding you will experience is hard to predict since women's bodies all react differently. Many women pass clots of tissue in the first week and this is no cause for alarm. The bleeding becomes lighter after two to three weeks and, the color changes as the uterus heals and returns to pre-pregnant size. Contact your doctor if you are still experiencing bleeding after 2 weeks.

Cramping

You may experience some mild cramping with the delivery for a few days. You may feel discomfort if you are passing clots. To relieve minor discomfort you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil). Some women find a heating pad or hot pack on the abdomen helps to relieve cramps. Some women have cramps for up to 10 days following the delivery while the uterus returns to its normal size.

Breast Tenderness

It can be very upsetting for a grieving mother to have breast tenderness or for her breast milk to come in, as it may feel like a sad reminder of the loss of her baby. Breast tenderness is normal. It is due to a hormonal change and should disappear within a few days.

Milk Supply

Breast milk may “come in”; milk production is different for every woman and can continue for a few days or a few weeks. If you notice a liquid discharge from your breasts, use an absorbent material inside a snug fitting bra. Any breast discharge should stop within a few days. The average time for milk to come in is 2-5 days after delivery but this can be delayed due to the stress of grieving.

You may wish to consider what you would like to do with your milk supply. Some women chose to limit the milk supply while others chose to express this milk & later donate it. If you do wish to donate breast milk (some mothers find it comforting to donate their breast milk to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for infants who require additional breast milk) see the appendix for the **NorthernStar Mother’s Milk Bank’s** contact information

If you chose to limit the milk supply see suggestions below.

Do not pump or regularly express milk from breasts. Gently hand express just enough to increase comfort. The pressure and lumpy feel of milk and tissue swelling may be uncomfortable for 3-4 days or in some cases as long as 10 days. Milk may continue to be produced for a time after this but should not be painful and will slowly be reabsorbed. It is possible to occasionally notice a few drops of milk for several months.

How to feel more comfortable:

- Wear a comfortable bra that offers good breast support;
- Use cold compresses on breasts for comfort. Apply a cloth-covered ice pack or bag of frozen peas to the breasts for 10-20 minutes several times during the day;
- Take pain medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil);
- Use breast pads to soak up any leaking milk; and/or
- When taking a shower, let the breasts leak to relieve the pressure. Avoid heat on the breasts as this could increase discomfort.

You may phone the Early Start Parent Information Line at **403-244-8351** or Health Link Alberta at **811** to speak to a nurse for advice on breast care.

See the resources in the back of this guide for more help with breast care.



Nausea and Diarrhea

It should resolve within 24-48 hours and it does not mean you are allergic to the medication given. If you experience nausea please speak with your pharmacist or doctor about taking over the counter medicine for nausea.

Fatigue

Because of a sudden change in body hormones after a delivery, you may feel tired. While feelings of tiredness should decrease within a few days, if they continue you should seek help from your doctor.

“It was very upsetting when I woke up in the night feeling as though I was still pregnant. That has gone away, but I still think of my baby at night sometimes.”

Your Body Returning to “Normal”

You should have a normal period 4-6 weeks after delivery. A pregnancy test may remain positive for several weeks after your baby’s delivery, as it takes time for the hormones to clear from your system. You can resume normal activities such as work, school and driving as soon as you feel up to it. Most women are eligible for maternity leave. Mothers who are still recovering from childbirth may want to consider taking all or part of their maternity leave. We would encourage them to take this time to help them heal emotionally & physically.

Avoid sex and use of a tampon or douche, due to the risk of infection for six weeks or until bleeding stops. You should see your doctor or midwife before you continue these activities. Once you begin having sex again, you may wish to use birth control until you are physically and emotionally ready for another pregnancy.

Continue with your prenatal vitamins unless you are instructed otherwise by your primary health provider.

Your Emotions

Following the loss of your baby, you and your partner may go through a wide range of feelings and emotions. There is no right or wrong way to feel.

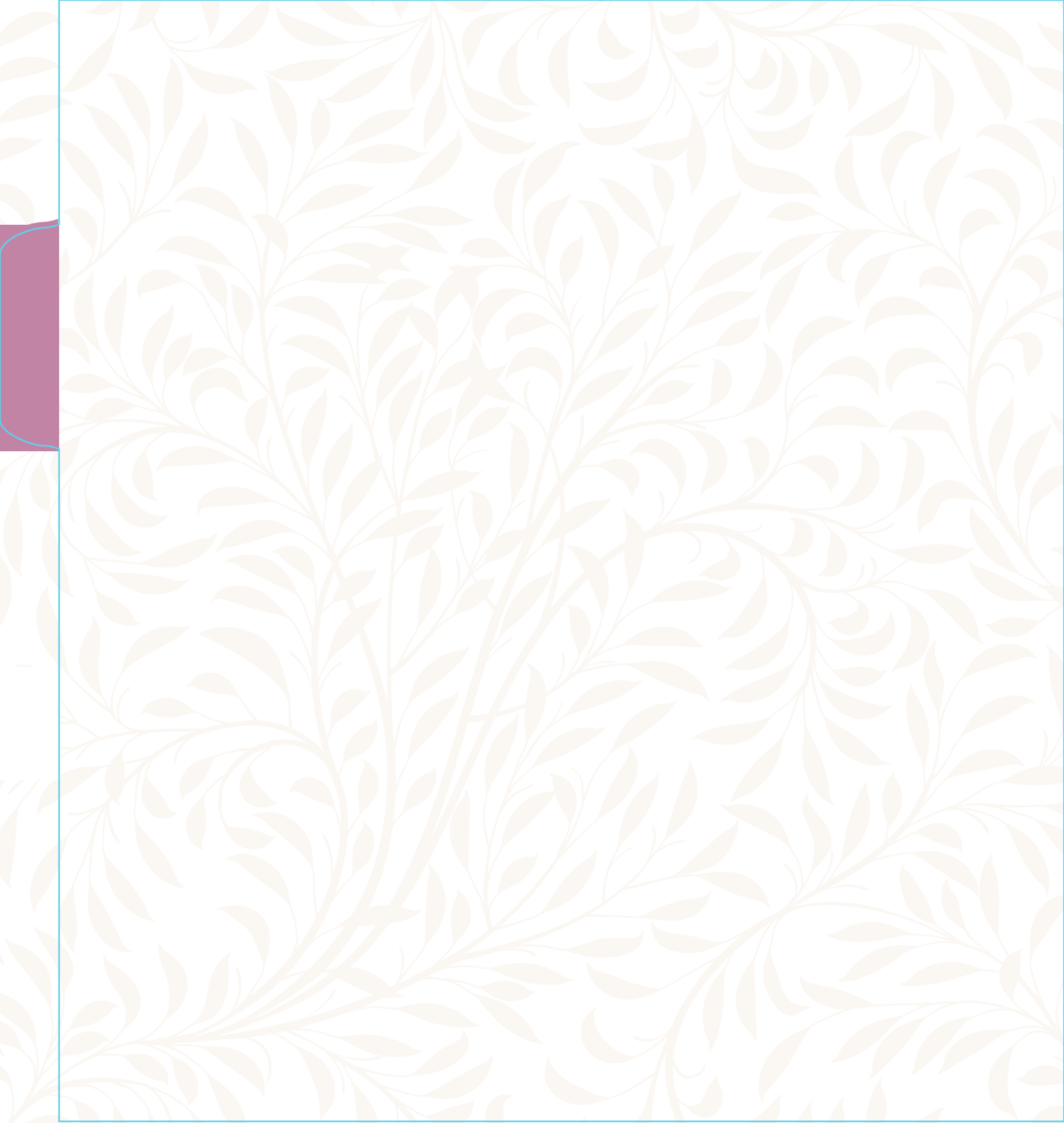
The feelings you have are related to the connections you felt with your baby during the pregnancy. Often, a mother may feel more attached in the early stages of a pregnancy because of the physical changes and feelings she experienced. It helps to acknowledge your sadness and disappointment, to allow yourself the opportunity to grieve, and to feel emotional pain. Healing from loss is a process & takes time. If you have feelings of self-blame or guilt, know there is nothing you did to cause the loss of your baby.

The loss of a baby is considered as one of the most difficult losses a person can experience. Many parents have said having time to say goodbye in a meaningful way helped them at the time of loss, and later, through the grief process.



After Your Loss

- Emotional Support
- Going Home
- The Loss of Twins or Multiples
- The Grief Journey
- Supporting Family
- Finding Support



The Impact of Grief

Emotional Support

Surround yourself with your supportive family and close friends, and let them know how they can support you emotionally by giving you the opportunity to talk about your baby and acknowledge your sadness.

You will need time to grieve, to rest, to physically heal, and to connect with each other. You will have unique feelings and reactions, and you will likely need some time to work through your grief.

Friends and family will also experience grief. They may or may not know how to share their concern or support. They may try to be reassuring, though sometimes the words used may not feel supportive. Tell them one or two ways they can be helpful, as they want to be able to do something for you. Do you need a few meals cooked for you? Would you like help telling others about your loss? Or would you prefer quiet time, with someone to be at home with you? It is okay to express your needs and wishes at this time.

Going Home

Returning to your home after a loss is often very emotional. You may find yourself thinking this experience was a bad dream. It may have felt sudden or unexpected. Returning home may reinforce the loss of your hopes and dreams of a future with your baby. For some families, taking the baby home for short time may be an important part of the grieving process. If you take your baby home for a visit, your health care team will offer options and discuss safe travel with your baby.

Allow your body and mind to heal. Have close ones or those most supportive to you around you at this time. Know that while these emotions are very intense right now, you need to give yourself some time to make sense of all you are feeling.

Over the next few days, you may need some time to rest or you might have to go back to the hospital or clinic for an appointment.



Speak to your health care provider if:

- you need a note for employment insurance benefits;
- you have other responsibilities preventing you from getting rest; and/or
- you are not sure if you can get back to the hospital quickly if needed

Putting away any baby things or furniture is something you might want to do together, or as a family once, you feel ready. It may be an important part of the grief process for each of you. Remember, there is no time frame in which this must be done. You may choose to create your own memory box with a few special, saved items.

Journaling your experience or creating your own memory book may help with special recognition of your baby as well. There are journal pages included in the section Your Lasting Memories for you to save memories special to you.

Speak to your health provider or a counsellor if you continue to feel sad or depressed. An appointment with a grief counsellor or bereavement coordinator may be helpful for you. Many parents find it helpful to attend a support group and talk with other parents who have experienced a loss.



Speak to your health provider or a counsellor if you continue to feel sad, anxious or depressed.



The Grief Journey

When you experience the loss of a baby, no matter the circumstance, you also lose hopes and dreams of what was to be. Feeling sadness and loss for those silent hopes is a natural part of grieving. Grieving can be hard work and takes energy. There is no set time for feelings of grief, and you will need to allow yourself and your partner to heal over time and find meaningful ways to remember. Allow yourself, your partner and family to do what is most helpful to each of you.

Try to create an environment where you have open communication. Avoid judging each other's reactions, as they will be unique to each of you. Even though both you and your partner have lost the same baby, how one parent grieves will be different from the other. Factors that impact your grief may include your personality, gender, previous experience of loss, experience with how your family handled grief, as well as cultural and religious factors.

Losing a baby requires physical recovery, emotional healing, and perhaps spiritual healing. Emotional healing most often takes longer than the physical healing. It is important to acknowledge and grieve the loss of your baby in order to heal emotionally. Grief is a process and it may return with other future losses, whether they are similar or different. Learning to live with grief and finding a way to make your baby part of your life will be important.

Often, parents will experience and express grief differently, as they had different experiences and feelings of attachment to the baby. You and your partner may find different ways to cope. At times, it may be hard to understand one another.

Among friends and family, you may experience times where grief makes others uncomfortable and it is not easy to talk about. Those around you may not know what to say or do to be helpful, and they may make an insensitive comment, while not meaning to upset you. You may feel as though your loss is not acknowledged by others, and you are alone.

Although it may not seem possible right now, the experience of many parents is that, over time, a dull ache replaces the strong feelings of grief and loss. Grief will stop dominating your life and eventually you will return to a "new" normal.

There are two common styles of coping with grief. Try to understand each other and how your partner may be handling his or her grief.

- **Thinking and Doing:** Grief that is expressed by thinking or doing, focuses on distracting yourself so as to not focus on the feeling. For example, you busy yourself with projects, volunteering, or pouring yourself into your work.
- **Feeling:** Grief is experienced emotionally where there are intense feelings & waves of emotions. This process focuses on checking into feelings and reflections and the energy around the emotional response. For example, strong sadness, crying, and wanting to talk about your baby.

“The loss of a child is the loss of innocence, the death of the most vulnerable and dependent. The death of a child signifies the loss of the future, of hopes and dreams, of new strength, and of perfection. - Arnold and Gemma 1994, iv, 9, 39

The Loss of Twin(s) or Multiple(s)

A multiple pregnancy becomes both unique and special for the expecting parents. While you may or may not have expected twins or multiples, once you knew, you will find yourselves forming strong bonds with the babies. You may think about how the siblings will be together. Feelings about the loss of a twin or multiples are also unique, as you are potentially grieving for more than one baby.

When One Twin or One or More Multiples Survives

If you are experiencing the loss of one twin or multiple, while one or more babies has survived, you may feel many mixed emotions including happiness about the surviving baby as well as grief regarding the loss of one or more babies. It is normal to feel anxious about the surviving baby(ies) and or regarding any health concerns he or she may have. Your reactions may feel opposite at times, as you are happy about the baby who has lived, but may also feel very sad about losing one or more babies.

Each milestone reached by the surviving baby may also remind you of the lost moments and milestones of your other baby. Let your health providers know if you are having these mixed feelings about your loss. The grief you experience may be the same as reviewed in other areas of this guide. You may wish to attend a support group or talk to a grief counsellor who has supported other families with a similar loss.

The Impact of Grief

Grief ...

- Is normal.
- Is our response to the loss of anything we value
- Is a unique process for each person
- Cannot be hurried
- Challenges our sense of meaning & purpose
- May lead to growth and healing

There are five areas that grief may affect: physical; cognitive; emotional; relationships (social) and spiritual. Grief may impact these areas at different times or what seems like “all at once.”

Physical

- Lack of energy
- Changes in sleep, appetite
- Stomach aches, nausea, or muscle aches
- Chest pain and tightness
- More colds or infections (weakened immune system)
- Breast tenderness
- Aching arms

Cognitive

- Shock, denial, confusion
- Problems concentrating or memory loss
- Fatigue or lack of motivation
- Decreased interest in things you enjoy
- Difficulty processing information and problem solving

Emotional

- Intense sadness
- Fear and anxiety, panic attacks, agitation
- Feeling helpless or overwhelmed
- Feeling alone
- Feeling guilt or shame
- Anger or resentment
- Decreased confidence or being unsure of yourself

Relationships / Social

- Isolated, alone
- Feeling out of touch with others
- Changes in relationships
- Not able to manage everyday life and work
- Losing touch with friends and family
- Upsetting to be near families with infants, children, or pregnant women

Spiritual

- Feeling your life has changed forever
- Questions about meaning and purpose
- Testing beliefs or faith – “why me” or “where is my God?”
- Increase or decrease in time spent with your faith community
- Losing sense of purpose – “why go on?”

Secondary Losses

There may be other ways in which you are affected by the loss of your baby and experience grief; such as the loss of a role, relationships, support systems or connections with community. You may feel the loss of not becoming a mother or father to your baby, or missing the opportunity to be together as a new family. Or, you may no longer feel comfortable meeting with a group of friends with new babies or attending baby showers.

Different Perspectives

People grieve differently and in addition to individual responses, there can be gender differences as well. A mother usually connects with the baby as soon as she knows she is pregnant. She spends a lot of time thinking about the baby and her physical changes. Sometimes a partner may have only been experiencing the baby’s growth through the mother’s eyes. For some partners, it may be more difficult to understand the level of impact of this loss on the mother.

Mothers may cry and want to talk about the baby, and the loss of their hopes and dreams. Partners may cope through distraction, return to work sooner, work longer hours, or busy themselves with hobbies. Some people will cope with the loss by connecting socially, others may grieve in private, and this may further increase distance in the relationship.

Most women find reassurance when they come to understand their partners are grieving too, even if the expression of their grief is different. This can decrease the isolation women often feel after a loss. You may find yourself switching between times of coping or recovery and times of loss. It is important to learn about and include the things that help you cope such as talking to supportive friends/family, practicing relaxation techniques, listening to music, reading, etc.

A Partner's Grief

Men and women may go through pregnancy loss differently because the bond with the baby is different. In the early stages, the father or partner may experience the pregnancy through the mother's eyes. As the pregnancy develops they can feel more involved and become more attached. A mother often connects with the baby as soon as she knows she's pregnant. The difference in attachment can affect how parents grieve.

Pregnancy loss affects both parents, but a partner's grief is often missed. It can be hard to understand or relate to your partner in your grief. This is normal. Try not to judge each other's reactions. Some people may find themselves experiencing their grief later than their partner does because they feel the need or expectation to 'carry on' as quickly as possible. They may want to 'do something' and will get involved with projects or distractions, or feel a need to problem solve or 'fix' the situation.

Friends and family may expect fathers or partners to be strong, so they may only ask how the mother is doing. This can make partners feel like they should hide their grief or like they aren't allowed to grieve. Most partners feel excited about the pregnancy too. A pregnancy loss can make the partner feel:

- sad
- angry
- helpless
- a sense of failure
- powerless

In some cases, feelings about a previous loss can resurface. As a partner, it's OK to talk to others about how you feel, especially with your partner.



Bereavement in Couples Relationship

When a couple experiences the loss of a baby, both parents are affected. So often, the person they have relied upon most, their spouse, may not be able to respond or support them. Each person attempts to deal with their loss and grief in their own way. And while each is experiencing the loss, the timing of grief and the expression of grief may be quite different.

Tips to help you cope

- Accept that your partner's way of dealing with grief will be different from yours.
- Each person will have had dreams and hopes for the baby. Sharing your dreams can give you insight into each other's feelings and the nature of your partner's loss.
- This can be a difficult time for families. Openness and communication are the keys to helping your relationship become deeper as you both heal.
- Your spouse cannot be your sole supporter. Seek outside support from friends, family, clergy, and support groups or from professional counsellors.
- Work at communicating your thoughts feelings, needs and emotions.
- Stress in your sexual relationship may develop. Approach your partner with understanding and compassion.
- Grief impacts people and changes them. Give each other time to accept these changes.
- Give yourself and your partner permission to enjoy life. Even though you are experiencing loss, do not expect to be sad all the time. Share laughter as well as the tears.
- Search for ways to nurture yourself.
- Take time for each other. Set a time to talk each day.

Finding Support

Talk about your grief and reactions with your partner. Other caring family members or friends can help you work through the grief though some of them may not understand your experiences and feelings. If finding the right words to say is difficult, you may wish to put your thoughts in writing before sharing with your partner. Another suggestion is to write a letter to your baby to help create a special memory about your baby.

Less effective ways of coping with grief can include working too much, use of alcohol or substances, more time away from your home or partner, or withdrawal from your partner. Try to avoid these behaviours and talk about your experiences of grief as best as you can. Remember grief is a process. It is important to give yourself permission to feel the various emotions.

You and your partner may also wish to use professional support such as a counsellor or attend a parent support group. Many parents have found connecting with other parents can be very meaningful and helpful in acknowledging their own grief. Other parents within support groups will know and understand many of the feelings you are having.

Be aware of signs you or your partner may be experiencing relationship issues or depression. Common symptoms of depression include: significant lack of sleep, or oversleeping, issues with healthy eating, or strong expressions of guilt, self-blame or thoughts of suicide. Counselling is available for you and/or your partner, as needed, through the programs and services outlined in the resource section.

Coping During Milestones

Whether it is a holiday season or the anniversary of your loss, feelings of grief and thoughts of your baby may resurface. Notice your feelings about the upcoming day, anniversary, or holiday and plan to take some time for extra self-care. Some suggestions from families include:

- Creating or reviewing your memory box and filling it with meaning items
- Write a letter to your baby
- Have a ritual (release a balloon, light a candle, plant a tree, have a service)
- Visit the cemetery or other special place
- Acknowledge the anniversary as an opportunity to honour your baby.
- Do gentle things to take care of yourself

Strategies for Coping and Self-Care

Taking care of yourself physically, mentally, socially and spiritually is important to the grief and healing process.

Emotionally

- Acknowledge your loss. It is not the length of time you had your baby, but the depth of your attachment to the baby. The loss is relative to the care, love, and attention you have shared for the baby.
- Recognize your feelings. You may experience a range of emotions such as sadness or anger. The feelings are all valid. You have experienced the loss of your baby and your hopes and dreams for this child.
- Allow yourself to be nurtured. Going for a massage, listening to music, reading, painting or writing in a journal are some ways to help.
- Pull out special mementos or your memory box and plan some time to be with these.
- Surround yourself with calm such as soft lighting and comforting music.
- Practice mindfulness or meditation.
- Limit your time spent using the computer or internet.
- Write a letter to your baby, a journal entry, or blog.
- Recognize your anger and find constructive ways to express it.

Physically

- Practice self-care. Drink plenty of water. Tears can be dehydrating.
- Make sure you are getting some nourishment even if this means you are eating small amounts more often.
- When possible go for walks or do some form of physical activity. This will help you sleep better and it will give you the energy to grieve.
- Attempt to keep to normal bedtime routines.
- If you drink alcohol, limit the amount you drink. Alcohol may numb the pain temporarily, however, it can affect your ability to cope.



Socially

- Know it is normal to not want to engage with others initially. “Cocooning” initially may be a way to conserve the limited energy you have.
- Reach out to your loved ones and support persons, or let them know that it helps when they check in with you.
- Allow friends and family to help. If you have older children, other family members may be willing to provide childcare or they may be able to help with meals, housework or running errands.
- You may experience feelings of jealousy toward parents who have babies or toward pregnant women. Know that these feelings are normal and do not make you an uncaring person.
- Engage in activities you enjoy and are nurturing for you.
- Give yourself permission to limit social media or disengage from it for a period of time.

Spiritually

- If it offers you comfort, participate in your spiritual or religious activities or community.
- Find ways to remember your baby for significant holidays such as Christmas, Eid, Hanukkah, etc. by getting an ornament in their honour.
- Plan ahead so you give yourself some scheduled time for remembering and do not overwhelm your schedule.
- Attend an event such as a candle-lighting ceremony or a ‘walk to remember’, or begin one with your family or community.
- Plant a tree or your favorite flowers to help you remember your baby.

***“For every grieving parent I meet, I know that my child has met their child.
We are all united in a very special way.”***

- Carissa Fowler

When Considering another Pregnancy

Often, physical healing occurs sooner than emotional healing. Some parents may wish to quickly become pregnant again while others feel they need more time. While only you can decide the best time for you to try again, we encourage couples to take the time to heal. You may need time to acknowledge the loss, and time to heal emotionally. Resist rushing to replace your loss with a new baby.

Other emotions may arise when you and your partner become pregnant again. You may be worried, anxious throughout the pregnancy, and even after your baby is born. It can be helpful to speak with a grief counsellor and your doctor about your concerns and strategies to help you cope. You may also wish to talk to your doctor about the best options for birth control

When to Get Help

You may find it difficult to consider asking for help. Sometimes feeling overwhelmed, down, or just unable to enjoy the things you usually enjoy can lead to isolation and possibly depression. Look for signs that you or your partner could benefit from counselling support including the following:

- Breaking into tears unexpectedly months after the loss;
- Not feeling able to get out of bed or do things you normally enjoy;
- Too much or too little sleep;
- Numbness or withdrawal from partner, family, or friends;
- Working beyond your normal schedule;
- Drinking more alcohol than usual or using other substances;
- Extreme or sudden changes of behaviour;
- Signs of addiction (food, gambling, alcohol, substances, internet, etc.);
- Continued physical symptoms;
- Focus on events surrounding the loss;
- Overwhelming anger / agitation; and/or
- Excessive spending or gambling.

See the Resources section of this guide for more information.

Supporting Family

Grandparents and children are often forgotten mourners. When a baby dies, the focus is generally on the parents. Yet grandparents, siblings, cousins, and other children in a couple's life may have been anxiously waiting for this baby to arrive. Grandparents grieve both for their adult child's loss as well as their hopes and dreams for their grandchild.

Supporting Children Following the Loss of a Baby

Death can be confusing to adults, let alone children. It is important to explain things in simple language they understand. Younger children can be quite literal. A child may have been upset about sharing attention with a new baby. The imaginative thinking of younger children may lead them to believe they caused the baby to die.

Try not to use phrases like "the baby was sick" as they may fear the next time you, or they are sick, something may happen. Saying the "baby has gone to heaven" without explaining what heaven is, can cause them to wonder when the baby will return. Tell a child the baby has died and explain what death means. Your child may ask the same questions repeatedly. Be gentle with a child and answer the questions as they come up. Try not to overwhelm him or her with too much information. Children will let you know by their questions and actions when they have heard too much.

It is natural as adults to want to protect children from emotional situations. If you are grieving, even if you try to hide it, children will know something is "off." A child may feel he or she is to blame for their parent's sadness. If you are open with your emotions, this will help your child to acknowledge what has happened.

Include your children in remembering the baby. You may have had pictures taken and can share them. Children may be creating untrue visions in their heads about what the baby looks like. A photo or their own drawings can help with these images. If a child is not ready to, or does not want to see photos, wait until he or she is ready.

Help your child create something tangible to honour the baby. They might help give the baby a name, or draw a picture. You may choose a ritual with meaning to you such as planting a tree, or releasing a balloon or lighting a candle.



Children and Grief

A child's understanding of death will vary according their age and experience with loss. The information below should be used as a guideline to help you tailor your information to children. It is not a substitute for medical care or counselling (reference Elyse C. Salek, and Kenneth R. Ginsburg, (2014) Building Resilience in Children and Teens: Giving Kids Roots and Wings, 3rd Edition).

Infants and Toddlers

Infants and toddlers do not understand death. But even very young infants can sense what their parents and caregiver are experiencing. Take care of yourself and recognize your need to grieve. Try to keep as many routines as possible intact. Routine is a protective force for children amid major disruptions. Avoid separation as much as possible and provide extra physical attention to comfort your child and enhance his sense of security.

Ages 3 - 5

Preschoolers are concrete thinkers, seeing things exactly as they appear and hearing things literally. It is important that they are told about death in simple, clear language. Be prepared for young children to continue to ask where the baby is and when they are coming back.

Concept of Illness

Believes sickness and death are temporary

Believes illness is caused by a specific action May believe that they caused the illness/death

Reactions and Coping

May regress behaviorally

May be angry about all the changes in schedule/activities and feel abandoned May play normally (this does not mean they are not affected)

Death concept

Views the separation as temporary and death as reversible

May feel they caused the death

Intermixes reality and fantasy

Reactions and Needs

Feelings of abandonment, loneliness or confusion

Regresses behaviorally

Will need repetition of facts and simple explanations

Needs support, comfort, honesty and reassurance

May act out the death through play activities

Children ages 6 - 8

School-aged children will begin to understand that death is a final event. Give them simple and honest explanations and then ask them how they understand the information. Take time to clear up any misunderstandings.

Young children may need your support to find the words to express their emotions and find ways to help them feel better. Give children repeated opportunities to talk about their feelings. **It is more important to listen than to say the perfect words.**

Concept of Illness

May worry that what happens to people who are sick, will happen to them

Can express feelings about what is happening

May ask for concrete facts about illness/ death

Defines illness in terms of how it affects them

Reactions and Coping

May react with confusion by the degree of emotion they are experiencing

May react with anger if usual activities are interrupted

May feel they are different from their peers or be concerned about peer reactions

Death concept

Views death as punishment

Concerned about the body and illness resulting in death

Views death as a taker/ or violent (often influenced by cartoons and media images)

Moves between concrete and magical thinking

Reactions and Needs

Can experience great fear

May experience nightmares or somatic complaints

Needs clear, understandable explanations

Needs support and reassurance (especially about your health)

Let them know that there are many people who love and care about them

Children ages 9-12

Pre-teen aged children are beginning to think logically and will likely have many 'why' questions and may need detailed information. Even though they can begin to understand that death is final, they may have difficulty talking about feelings or expressing them. Children at this age are often involved in activities and relationships outside of their homes and families (and so may be getting information from friends or media).

Concept of Illness

The meaning of the illness or death is centred on how it affects the child socially
May not understand the reasons for the illness or disease process

Reactions and Coping

May focus on how the loss has disrupted their life
May try to cover up feelings in an effort to appear more 'grown up'
May be unhappy if they have additional responsibilities given to them
May want specific information and details
May hide feelings from peers

Death concept

Views death as permanent but not universal.
Interested in biological details.
Is concerned with practicalities

Reactions and Needs

Experiences anxiety and fear
May cover up emotions and feelings
May withdraw or ask endless questions
Needs honest, accurate information
Needs grieving to be modeled
Needs reassurance

Teens aged 12+

Teenagers are beginning to understand more fully the realities of death and dying. This growing comprehension means that teens will experience the loss with more insight, compassion and conflict. Since young teens are beginning to understand death, they experience powerful feelings of sadness, anger, guilt and fear. Older teens are moving away from the self-centredness of younger years and understand the effect of the loss on themselves and others.

Concept of Illness

General understanding of how the body works
Understands the significance of serious illness

Reactions and Coping

May remain very close and then withdraw to be with friends
Worries about the future
Understands how others are feeling
Needs the support of friends

Concept of Death

Views death as universal, inevitable and permanent
Can philosophize and examine the meaning of life

Reactions and Needs

May regress in school
Will seek support outside the family
May experience anger
Needs space to initiate talking and sharing emotion
May express themselves through writing, poetry, art or reading
Suppression of grief may lead to defiant behaviour

In anything that seems important for your family, try to include the children. Children should be welcomed to take part in the various memorial services or your own rituals throughout the year.

Remember to be gentle to yourself and your children. The baby that was lost will always be a part of your family. It will take time for everyone to figure out how that will be.

Please refer to the sheet later in this guide regarding Grandparent's Grief.

Options for Support

You are not alone. There are other families who understand your experiences and emotions. It has been very helpful to many families to connect with one of the following resources.

- Pregnancy or infant loss grief counsellor
- Peer support group or bereavement group
- Memorial events
- Events of remembrance
- Private counselling
- Couples counselling
- Books, videos or articles
- Parent blogs

You will find local resource information in a later section of this booklet. While there is much information available via the internet, find information helpful to you and consistent with your values and beliefs.

A Grandparent's Grief

Like children, grandparents are often referred to as the 'forgotten mourners' when they lose a grandchild to a neonatal death. Grandparents grieve twice. They grieve for the grandchild they were expecting, the hopes and dreams of a new grandchild, but they also grieve for their adult child and his or her partner who are facing a loss.

The loss of a baby is devastating because the loss defies the natural life cycle, where the older generation feels they should die first. Grandparents often feel helpless and powerless because they are not able to protect their adult child or grandchild from this traumatic experience. This can be a heart wrenching experience. Seeing the impact of the baby's death on the parents is particularly hard for the grandparents to bear.

Grandparents are experiencing their own grief while also trying to support their grieving adult child. How you support your adult child will depend on a number of factors: your relationship with your child; circumstances of the loss; your health; and personal & financial resources. This may also bring up losses you may have had in the past.

Remember that grief is a unique experience; each person grieves in their own way. You will grieve differently than your partner, as will your adult child and their partner. Each of us is influenced by our gender, culture, our learned styles of grieving, as well as beliefs about how grief should be expressed and for how long. The important thing to remember is there is no right or wrong way to grieve.

How to Care for Yourself

- Allow yourself to cry. This allows your children to feel supported in their loss and grief.
- It is important to take care of your body through eating well, drinking plenty of water, being physically active every day and getting adequate rest and sleep.
- Write your feelings in a journal or read about grief.
- Some grandparents have shared how doing something physical in honour of their grandchild has been helpful, such as building a memory box, making a swing, or planting a garden.
- Seek support through a support group, counselling or talking to your friends. Find support outside of your child who may be too overwhelmed with their own grief to support you.
- If you drink alcohol, limit the amount you drink. Alcohol may numb the pain temporarily, however, it can affect your ability to cope.
- Contact available grief programs in your area for further information or support.

What not to say

- You are lucky you have (or can have) other children.
- It was meant to be / it was part of life's plan.
- It is better you did not have time to know the baby.
- You need to move on.
- Don't cry, don't be sad.
- I'll pray for you (unless the family has asked you to pray for them).
- Comments about God and angels.

How You May Be Able to Help

- Ask the parents what would be helpful, and check in regarding their specific wishes.
- Ask about a good time to call or visit.
- Prepare meals or help with things around the home, or even organize a few people to help at different times in the weeks ahead.
- Take the initiative and reach out to them.
- Help with notifying others (by parent request).
- Offer to drive to appointments.
- Assist with funeral arrangements and attend the funeral or memorial service.
- Help with ways to remember the baby – write a poem or letter, give a special memento to the family (ornaments, jewelry, art, ceramics etc.).
- Offer care for other children.

You can help by recognizing the signs of someone who is at risk. A parent with ongoing or significant sleep disturbances, changes in appetite or activities, or thoughts of blame, guilt or suicide will benefit from professional support.

For more information, resources and to access support:

Calgary - Access Mental Health: Phone 403-943-1500 or call the Mental Health Help Line (Alberta): Phone: 1-877-303-2642

Pregnancy & Infant Loss Program (Calgary Zone)

Phone: 403-944-8835 or Visit www.pregnancyloss.ca or

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/fmc/Page16422.aspx>



Ways to Say Goodbye

- Memorials
- Private Arrangements
- Funeral Services
- Other ways to Remember



Ways to Say Goodbye

Say goodbye to your baby in a way that feels right & meaningful for you. There are many decisions you have to make at this time, and you may feel like you want others to make these decisions for you. However, this is one of the few opportunities you have to parent this baby. The lasting memories you make will be very important for you and your family. Please take your time and consider your options. Do what you think is most fitting for you and your family.

Some parents choose to take their baby home before a burial or cremation. **Know this is your right.** This is an opportunity for families to spend some private time together. If you wish to do this, you will need to get a burial permit before leaving the hospital. You will also need to identify the funeral service provider you have chosen to help with your baby's burial or cremation.

For a neonatal loss, it is required by law to have a proper burial or cremation for your baby. A funeral service provider will need to be involved in the care of your baby. Ask your health provider about the location where your baby will be held, and for information on how you or your funeral service provider may pick up your baby.

Selecting a Funeral Home

This is the first step in funeral or memorial service planning. Funeral homes provide personalized care for a funeral or memorial service. Professional services include consultation with a funeral director, use of funeral home or crematorium facilities, and preparation of the baby's body for burial or cremation. They can also provide support with cremation or burial arrangements.

Families may choose a funeral home based on preference, experience, or referral from a family/friend. Funeral homes make arrangements to move your baby to their location. If an autopsy is being done, the funeral home will make arrangements to move your baby once this is completed.

For a listing of Funeral Service Providers in Alberta, visit: <http://www.afsrb.ab.ca/listings.asp>

In Calgary, you may contact the hospital Admitting office for more information about where your baby will be and when you or your funeral service provider can pick up your baby. If you have chosen an autopsy, your baby will be at the Alberta Children's Hospital.

Funerals or Memorial Services

Funerals are typically a service at which the body is present. You decide on the format and location of the ceremony and who is invited to attend. Memorial services do not require a body to be present, they can be held at a variety of locations, and can be held at a time that is best for the family.

Burial

- Burial can include earth burial (interred), or it can be an above-ground burial (entombed in a crypt within a mausoleum).
- It is recommended that a burial involve a funeral service provider, to be sure the remains are buried according to legislation.
- Costs for burial may be higher because of a required plot and maintenance.

Cremation

- Is usually less expensive.
- Allows the option of burying, keeping or scattering your baby's ashes.
- No casket is required - just a simple combustible container/urn.
- Can take the ashes with you - in case of a later memorial service or a move.
- After cremation, in order to scatter your baby's remains, you need advance permission from most public lands. Ask the funeral service provider for more information.

Note: Funeral homes often have information about organizations that may help with any costs. If you have life insurance, please check with your life insurance policy provider to see if there are funeral benefits for your baby, even if you have not had time to officially add your baby to your policy. Your employee benefits office of insurance provider/agent can assist you in clarifying your coverage.



“Holding our baby’s memorial was one of the toughest things we have had to do. Now, it’s one of the most special memories we have.”

Choices or considerations after the loss of your baby:

- Consider if you want burial or cremation
- Make private arrangements with a funeral service provider of your choice and choose a location for a funeral or memorial service.
- Who would you like to attend a service?
- Which poems, readings, music to include at a memorial service or celebration of life
- Birth & death announcement is one way of honoring your baby’s life & informing others of your loss
- Preferred ways to recognize the baby’s life



Other Ways to Remember

Recognition of Life

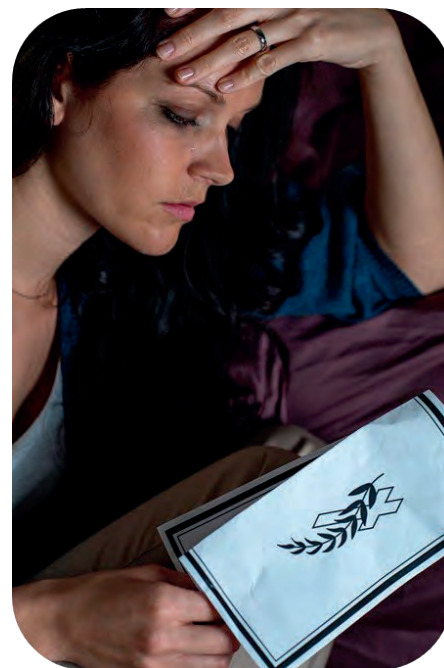
You may decide not to have a formal ceremony, and may choose to have a private recognition of your baby's life. This could be with just you and your partner, or you may include family. It can be offered in whatever format you decide is meaningful to you. It is important to find ways for you and your family to create memories. You may choose to use the mementos you have of your baby, or you can add to them. You may do it soon after the loss or you may wait until you are feeling physically and emotionally stronger. Take whatever time you need to plan this.

Obituary

Writing an obituary is another way of honoring the life and death of your baby. It could be long or short, detailed or simple. It can include personal poems or a message.

Family Rituals

Families may honour their baby by planting a tree, creating, building, or buying a symbolic item, selecting a special holiday arrangement, choosing a tattoo, or writing a poem. Other families will release a balloon(s) at a special ceremony. We encourage you to do something meaningful to you to recognize the loss of your baby, no matter how simple or unique it might seem.



“Now my family and I have ways to remember our baby. We have a holiday ornament for our baby and recognize our baby’s birthday.”

If you choose to have your baby's remains cremated, you may choose to place some of the ashes within memorial jewelry (search for Memorial jewelry online) or to scatter the ashes in a place that has personal significance to you. Another option is to have ashes incorporated into an art piece.

Planting a symbolic tree can also be a way to remember a loss. In Calgary, the city has a Symbolic Tree Program in which you can plant a tree in one of Calgary's parks. For more information on this program you can go to <https://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/Parks/Pages/Programs/Tree-planting/Symbolic-Tree-Program.aspx>



"I love you forever, I'll like you for always. As long as I'm living, my baby you'll be"

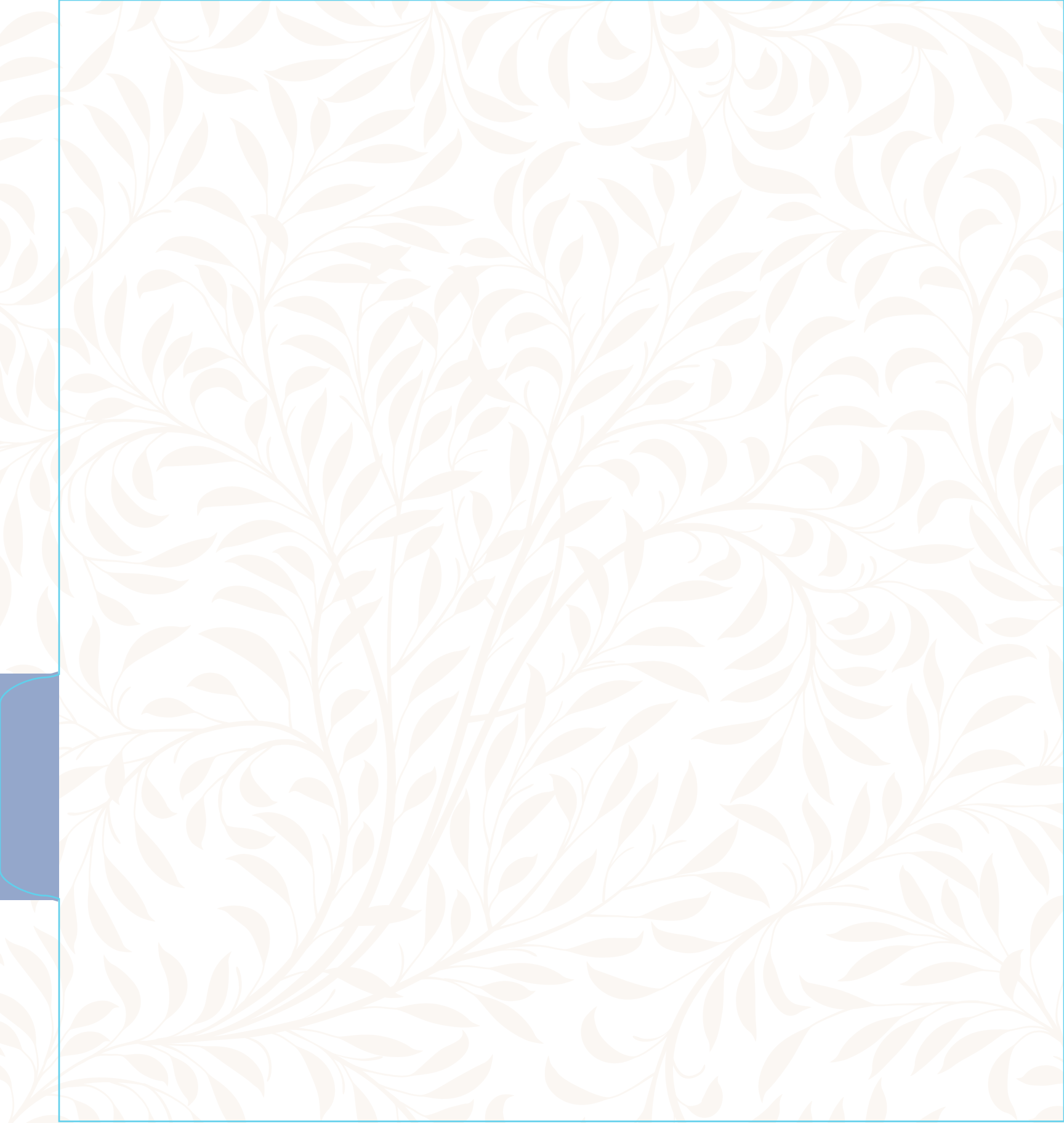
- Robert Munsch





Resources

- [Health Services Available to You](#)
- [Services in Alberta](#)
- [Checklist for Parents](#)
- [Service of Remembrance](#)



Health Services Available to You

When you have had the loss of a newborn baby, various services may be involved.

- **Obstetrician, Neonatologist, family physician or midwife:** your primary health care provider or pregnancy care provider can provide support and can help you access testing, required care, hospital services, or follow-up care.
- **Pregnancy and Infant Loss Program:** Offers grief support for women and their family members who have experienced a pregnancy or infant loss. Bereavement support groups and remembrance services and events are also offered. For more information go to www.pregnancyloss.ca or <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/services/Page3818.aspx>
- **Community and Peer Support Groups:** See the Resources section of this Guide.
- **Online Support:** There are a number of online support options. Please see the webpages listed above and click on the Related Websites tab for some suggested sites.
- **Children's Hospice and Pediatric Palliative Care Team (CHaPS):** offers pediatric palliative care for the newborn and grief support (counselling and groups) for parents who experience the loss of a baby 28 days and older. For more information go to <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/palliative-care/newborn-child-youth/what-is-it> or Phone CHaPS palliative care: 403-955-5460 or CHaPS grief support program: 403-955-5463
- **Genetic Counsellor** - for genetic information about this, and future pregnancies



Your primary health care provider or pregnancy care provider can provide support.



Events/Memorial Services

Service of Remembrance

The Service of Remembrance is held once a year for the Calgary area. If you would like to receive more information and an invite, please contact 403-944-4460. You may scan the form attached or email us at EPA@albertahealthservices.ca with the information below.

To participate in the Service of Remembrance (offered once a year in Calgary), send the following information to indicate your interest to the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Program at EPA@albertahealthservices.ca

You will receive an invitation approximately one month in advance of the service and will be asked to RSVP to confirm your interest and confirm the number of people attending.

Mother's Name _____

Partner's Name _____

Baby's Name _____

Date of Loss _____

Would you like the baby's name read during the service? Yes No

How many attending? _____

Contact name and number _____

Mailing address _____

Pregnancy Infant Loss

RM 185 Women's Health Centre – FMC

1441 29th St NW

Calgary Alberta T2N 4J8

Phone: 403-944-4460

Fax: 403-944-1102

Services in Alberta

Alberta Health Services

See www.myhealth.alberta.ca to search for available health services and resources in your area. AHS Pregnancy and Infant Loss Programs - see Calgary, Edmonton or Red Deer under listings. For more information such as book lists and other resources for bereaved families, please visit:

- www.pregnancyloss.ca or <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/fmc/Page16422.aspx>
- www.MyHealthAlberta.ca and search for Pregnancy and Infant Loss or go to <https://www.ahs.ca/findhealth/Service.aspx?id=1008361&serviceAtFacilityID=1046419#contentStart>

Alberta Funeral Service Association Directory at www.afsrb.ab.ca/listings.asp.

Access Mental Health (403) 943-1500 Offers information about mental health services and options.

Avery's Legacy - Will donate a 'Child Loss Bereavement box' free of charge to newly grieving parents in Calgary & Central Alberta (neonate to 17 years). Contact www.Averyslegacy.com & go to 'refer a family'

Connect Family and Sexual Abuse Network (telephone support lines)

Sexual Violence Phone: 1-877-237-5888

Domestic Violence Phone: 1-866-606-SAFE (7233)

Distress Centre - 24 hour support 403-266-HELP (4357)

Health Link - phone 811 for quick and easy advice from a registered nurse 24/7.

Mental Health Help Line 1-877-303-2642

NorthernStar Mother's Milk Bank 403-475-6455

Email - contact@northernstarmilkbank.ca or go to www.northernstarmilkbank.ca

Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep (volunteer photography services)

www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org

Calgary

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Program Calgary Zone Phone: 403-944-8835

Grief counseling and support groups - part of the Women's Health Ambulatory Care Program. It provides grief support and resources to parents and other family members who have experienced a pregnancy loss (miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, still birth, neonatal death or medical induction) through individual, couple, and group counseling.

www.albertahealthservices.ca/services/Page3818.aspx or www.pregnancyloss.ca.

You can self-refer or request a referral through your health care provider.

Bereaved Parent Group – a 6 week group offered twice a year. For more information call 403-944-8835

Caring Beyond: is a parent grief support group which meets on a monthly basis. Group meets in Calgary the first Wednesday of every month at 7.30 p.m. in Rm 160 at the Women's Health Center – Foothills Hospital. It meets in Airdrie the 3rd Wednesday of every month. For more information, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/CaringBeyond/>

Children's Hospice and Palliative Care Service (CHaPS) -offers pediatric palliative care for the newborn and grief support (counselling and groups) for parents who experience the loss of a baby 28 days and older. For more information go to <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/palliative-care/newborn-child-youth/what-is-it> or Phone: CHaPS palliative care: 403-955-5460 or CHaPS grief support: 403-955-5463

Early Start Parent Information Line (403-244-8351) or Health Link Alberta to speak with a nurse for advice at 811.

Infertility Support Group Meets on a monthly basis. For additional information email: connect@conceivable.ca

Edmonton

Aid for Symptoms & Serious Illness Support Team (ASSIST) - based at the Stollery Children's Hospital in Edmonton provides care to babies in intensive care. Phone:780-407-7825

Perinatal Bereavement Program – Support and resources for families who have experienced a pregnancy or infant loss. Lois Hole Hospital for Women/Royal Alexandra Hospitals. The Program offers inpatient support, outpatient one to one support, and coordination of a Burial Program and coordination of Annual May Memorial. Phone: 780-735-4506

ParentCare Support Society - is a support group for of Parents Helping Parents who have suffered the loss of a baby through miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirth or early infant death up to 28 days. The group meets on the third Thursday of every month from 7:30- 9:30. Email contact: parentcareyeg@gmail.com TEL: 780-989 5040 or see the website www.parent-care.ca.

Grieving Parents of Edmonton Society - A support group for parents grieving the death of a child regardless of age or circumstance. Meet every 3rd Thursday of the month at 7:30PM. The Plumbers & Pipefitters Union Building. 16214-118th Ave NW Edmonton, TEL: (780)451-5381 Email- gpchair@grievingparents.ca Website: www.grievingparents.ca

SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) - (Baby's Breath) Dedicated to the emotional support of those who are affected by SUDC, Stillbirth and SIDS. Ph: 1-800-363-7437(END-SIDS) info@babysbreathcanada.ca, www.babysbreathcanada.ca

H.E.A.R.T.S. "Helping Empty Arms Recover through Sharing" Edmonton/Sherwood Park Chapter. A baby loss support program for anyone touched by the loss of a baby during pregnancy or any time after birth. TEL: 780-464-3217 Email- heartsbabyloss@shaw.ca

Whispers Baby Loss Support Program for Sherwood Park/Fort Saskatchewan - Baby Loss Support Group: for families who have lost a baby during pregnancy or shortly after birth. Call to register. Ph: 780-974-7054 www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca

Fort Saskatchewan

Whispers Baby Loss Support Program for Sherwood Park/Fort Saskatchewan - Baby Loss Support Group: for families who have lost a baby during pregnancy or shortly after birth. Call to register. Ph: 780-974-7054 www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers
angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca

Grand Prairie

Tiny Hands of Hope: For families touched by all types of infant loss, including pregnancy loss, neonatal loss, stillbirth, SIDS and infant death to age of 24 months. Forbes Presbyterian Church 9635 – 76 Avenue Grande Prairie, AB Website: <http://www.tinyhandsofhope.ca>

Red Deer

Red Deer: Perinatal Bereavement Program: Located in Red Deer Regional Hospital. Provides Hospital intervention for inpatients and public health follow-up for parents whose baby has died because of miscarriage, stillbirth, or early neonatal death. Ph: 403-343-4422

H.E.A.R.T.S. “Helping Empty Arms Recover Through Sharing” Red Deer Chapter. A baby loss support program for anyone touched by the loss of a baby during pregnancy or any time after birth. Meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm. Red Deer Brumner Avenue Community Health Centre Contact: heartreddeer@shaw.com

Lethbridge

Lethbridge Community Mental Health Clinic Alberta Health Services

200 5th Avenue South, Lethbridge, AB T1J 4L1
Phone: 403-381-5260 403-381-5280 Fax: 403-382-4518

Medicine Hat

Parent to Parent Support Group of Southeastern Alberta - A group for families who have lost an infant to Miscarriage, Ectopic Pregnancy, Stillbirth, S.I.D.S and any infant loss up to one year of age. Group meets once a month on the 3rd or 4th Wednesday at 7:30pm. For location or more information contact group coordinator at 403-529-9175 or by mail at Box 731, Medicine Hat Alberta, T1A 7G6.

EVENTS

Walk to Remember:

Held in many locations throughout Alberta.

The Calgary Walk to Remember is held the 2nd Saturday in Sept. For more information see:

www.calgarywalktoremember.ca

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day October 15th

For more information see the Calendar of events at <http://www.october15.ca/category/events/> Everyone is invited to light a candle at 7 p.m. in all time zones all over the world.

CALGARY EVENTS

Tiny Footprints Gala

An annual gala held in October to celebrate and honour pregnancy and Infant Loss. For more information see their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/tinyfootprintsYYC/>.

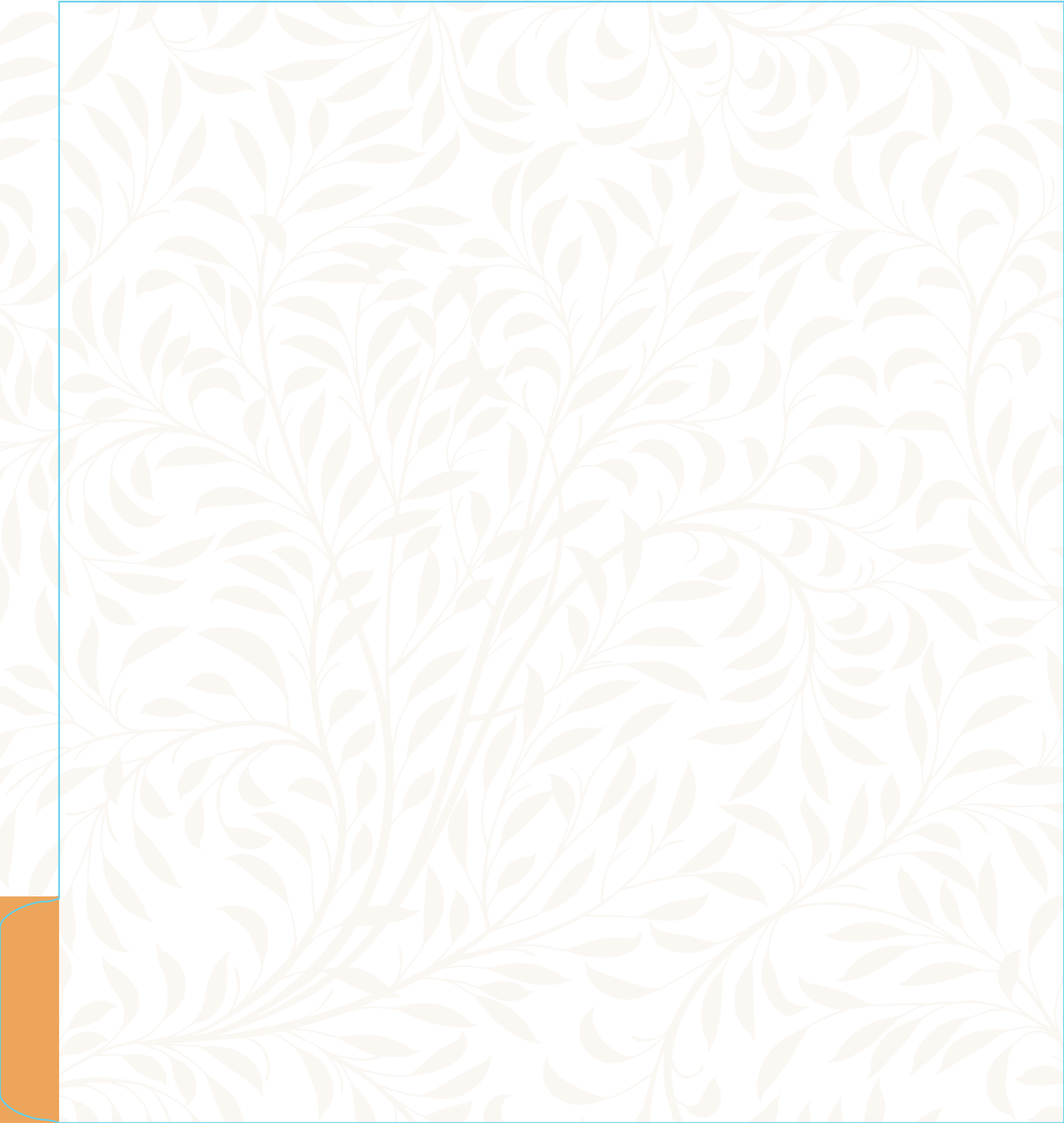
Candlelight Services

Caring Beyond Support Group's annual Candle Light Ceremony to remember our precious babies whom we have lost. For more information call 403-944-2209 or see their Facebook page at

www.facebook.com/caringbeyond/



Your Lasting Memories



Your Lasting Memories – Journal

When I first knew I was pregnant

I shared the news with

My hopes & dreams

How we chose your name/nick name

Your name means

Your Lasting Memories – Journal

Your Lasting Memories – Journal



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Your Lasting Memories – Journal



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