



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Supporting you following late miscarriage (14 – 20 weeks)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

## Obstetrics & Gynaecology

- ① For more information, please use the contact details at the back of the booklet:

York Hospital

Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Or

Scarborough Hospital

Woodlands Drive, Scarborough YO12 6QL

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# **Supporting you during late miscarriage**

When late miscarriage occurs parents often feel overwhelmed by their sadness. We extend our sympathy to you and appreciate that the days and weeks following the death of your baby can be bewildering and difficult. It is especially hard that there are important decisions that have to be made, at a time when you probably feel quite unable to think calmly or clearly about anything.

There is no right or wrong way to do things. Take your time; you do not necessarily need to make any decisions immediately. Try to take things one step at a time.

This leaflet deals with your immediate care and the birth of your baby.

## **What happens next?**

This may depend on whether your labour has started or you need to be induced. It might be possible for you to go home to prepare for the delivery of your baby and consider the choices available, providing that it is safe for you to do so.

It is safer for you to go through labour to deliver your baby. Whenever possible we will adhere to your wishes for your delivery. We will explain all the options and procedures to you as often and as thoroughly as you wish.

# **What will happen if I need to be induced?**

The method of induction usually depends on discussion with your consultant, but one of the most commonly used treatments are described below:

Mifepristone is an oral tablet that aims to soften the cervix and can make induction of labour easier and reduce the time you are in labour. If this is appropriate for you, you will be given one tablet to take before you go home and return when you are in labour or after 48 hours for further induction.

If your labour has not started after 48 hours, further oral or vaginal prostaglandins can be used; these continue the induction process which will replicate a labour and vaginal delivery.

As part of the induction process you may need a “drip” placed in your arm to continue the induction process further. This will contain a hormone called syntocinon that initiates and maintains contractions.

The doctor will explain which of these options would be most suitable for you.

Whilst you are in hospital you may eat and drink unless the nurse or doctor asks you not to.

You will need to bring into hospital with you:

- An overnight bag and toiletries
- Nightwear and comfortable clothes
- Underwear
- Slippers and dressing gown (optional)
- Sanitary towels

You may like to bring things with you for your baby, for example clothes, toys, mementos.

Whilst at home take your time to re-read all the information given to you and you may want to start filling out the plan of care booklet with your wishes for delivery and immediate care of your baby.

You could also download the Sands bereavement support app on: [www.sands.org.uk/app](http://www.sands.org.uk/app). This can help guide you through your bereavement journey.

There are a number of voluntary support groups/helplines and websites that you can also view, located in the back of this booklet.

If you go into labour at home you will need to return to the hospital, please contact the midwives on labour ward in order to arrange this, the telephone number is at the back of this booklet.

You may return to hospital before the date arranged if you no longer wish to remain at home.

# Where will I deliver my baby?

There are three places that are available for delivering your baby. These are

- Bereavement room in York located just off labour ward.
- Labour ward in York.
- Bereavement room in Scarborough located on the labour ward.

Parents are requested to contact the nominated ward for delivery at 08:00 hours on the date booked to ensure that this is still available. If this is unavailable further options for care will be discussed with you or admission may need to be delayed.

# Will I be given pain relief?

Induction and labour can sometimes be a painful process and pain relief is always available.

In early labour you may like to consider coping options such as warm baths or pain relieving tablets.

Stronger methods of pain relief are available whenever you need them. We will answer any questions you may have about this.

Pain relief options include:

- Injections of Pethidine or Morphine,
- PCAS – Patient Controlled Analgesia System:  
A morphine pump which enables you to control your own pain relief,
- Entonox – Gas and air.

Injections of opioids are not recommended as they may cause drowsiness and affect your ability to understand what is happening and remember the events in the future which may add to your distress.



## **What happens when I am ready to give birth?**

A side room will have been allocated to you on your admission, and you will usually stay there for your delivery. The nurse or doctor caring for you will explain everything that is happening and involve you in your care.

Towards the end of your labour, you may feel pressure in your bottom and the urge to use the toilet or push. Your midwife may need to examine you to see if your baby's birth is imminent. When they are sure you are ready you will then be encouraged to push to give birth to your baby. You may need an injection to help deliver the placenta. This will usually be delivered soon after the baby. If this does not happen, you may require help from a doctor to remove your placenta. Your midwife or doctor will explain this process to you if required.

Once your baby is born, we will carry out your wishes. You may change your mind about anything at any time.

## **What happens after I have delivered my baby?**

You and your partner are welcome to stay as long as you need. The doctor will also come to check your health to make sure you are well enough to go home. Throughout your stay you may be able to have other family members to support you through this difficult time.

You will be offered opportunities to meet and hold your baby and create memories. Parents often find making memories following the death of their baby valuable and sharing these memories may be beneficial to the grieving process in the future.

The midwife or nurse will be guided by you at this time and by what you may have decided prior to delivery on your plan of care. You may change your mind at any time and decline any or all mementos if you wish that are offered to you.

You need to be aware that your baby's body will alter following the birth. Keeping the environment cool and the special "cold cot", "cold plate" or "cold mattress" which your baby will be in/on when not being held significantly slows this process. This means that the baby can be with you as long as you wish.

# **Will I have to make any decisions about my baby?**

Your nurse or midwife will be more than willing to discuss any of the following with you:

## **Naming, Blessing or Baptism**

Your nurse will contact the hospital chaplain if you would like them to, or you may ask your own minister to come to the hospital. They can name, bless or baptise your baby with or without you present and provide a keepsake for you. A book of remembrance is available in the hospital chapel in which your baby's name can be entered.

## **Photographs**

The nurse or midwife will offer to take photographs of your baby. If you do not wish to have them, they will be kept in your medical notes in case you change your mind at a later date. These may not be available immediately, and if not, your midwife will arrange with you how and when they will be ready to collect. You can of course take your own photographs.

## **Mementos**

We can give you a small box to hold any mementos you wish to keep such as prayer cards, small toy etc. You may choose whether or not to take this home.

## **Registration**

Babies born at this stage of pregnancy do not need to be legally registered as a birth. If your situation is different the nurse, midwife or doctor will discuss with you what is required. However, the person looking after you can provide a certificate of life as a memento to take home, this is not a legal certificate.

## **Funeral, Burial / Cremation**

A member of staff from Bereavement Services can visit you in hospital after the birth of your baby or telephone you once you are discharged. They will be able to discuss the options available to you regarding funeral arrangements for your baby and, if you wish, assist you with the organisation.

If you choose not to have the involvement of Bereavement Services, then you are perfectly entitled to make your own arrangements.

However, all parents need to discuss with the bereavement officer their wishes about what happens to their baby and until this has occurred no arrangements can be made.

Please note that there is no immediate rush to make decisions and that you are free to go home and discuss this as a family in your own time.

If you have any questions in regard to the options available to you at this time, then you can contact Bereavement Services.

The booklet “Information to help you following the loss of your baby” also provides further information. If you have not received this, please ask for a booklet.

### **A Post Mortem (Autopsy)**

The doctor or midwife will discuss the reasons that a post mortem examination may be useful with you and your partner. It may find out why the baby died or help you to make decisions about future pregnancies. Sometimes no cause for the miscarriage can be found. A post mortem may be the only guaranteed way of knowing the sex of your baby as it can be difficult to tell at this stage of their development. There will be plenty of time for you both to find out about this procedure and think about it. The medical or nursing staff can give you a leaflet which explains the procedure. All post mortems take place in Leeds Hospital.

If you decide to give consent to a post mortem, you will be asked to complete a ‘Permission for Post Mortem’ form. Post mortem results will usually be available at your follow up appointment at about twelve weeks.

## Other tests

There are other less involved tests we can offer to try and identify the cause of your miscarriage.

- Blood tests. The mother will be offered the opportunity to have some blood tests to look for problems that may have contributed to the miscarriage.
- Vaginal swabs. We can take vaginal swabs if you so wish. These may be helpful if infection is suspected as a possible cause for the miscarriage.
- Placental swab. Again, a swab taken from the placenta after delivery can be taken to screen for infection.
- Cord and placental sample. A sample of the baby's umbilical cord and placenta can be taken for genetic testing. There is a chance that this test may not be successful, and we may not get a result from it. If it does work, we may be able to also confirm the baby's sex.
- Placental pathology. The placenta can be sent to Leeds for Histology by a paediatric pathologist. The results of this can give the obstetrician important information about acute or chronic events that may have contributed to your miscarriage.

## **Can I take my baby home?**

There is no legal reason why parents should not take their baby home to make their own arrangements for the funeral unless the death is to be investigated by a coroner.

For your protection and to avoid misunderstanding there is some important paperwork which will be given to you to complete. If you would like to do this, please have a look at the 'Taking Your Baby Home' leaflet.

If you have consented to a post mortem you can still take your baby home following this procedure.

Some families also opt to have the baby at home the night before the funeral. Please discuss this with the bereavement officer who can guide you through this procedure

## **Remembrance Services**

A small remembrance service is held every year at both York and Scarborough hospitals for any family who have lost a baby at any stage of pregnancy. If you would like more information, please ask us for details.

## **How will my body react after the delivery of my baby?**

You can expect a moderate amount of vaginal bleeding, which reduces slowly over the first week but may last three to four weeks.

Your uterus should gradually return to its non-pregnant size. This can take up to 10 days. During this time, you may experience some mild period type stomach pains or `after pains` pain relieving tablets such as Paracetamol can be given to you to take home. Also, you can occasionally need iron tablets which again can be given on discharge home.

Very occasionally you can start to produce breast milk following your baby's delivery and either the hospital or your GP can give you medication to try and prevent this.

If you have any other problems or complications your doctor will explain these to you as needed and answer all your questions. Please do not hesitate to ask your GP if you are worried about anything.



## **Do I have any further appointments?**

You will be sent an appointment to see your consultant for about eight to 12 weeks' time. This will be an opportunity for you to discuss any results from the tests you may have had. You may have your own questions about future pregnancies.

## **Who will contact me after discharge?**

The midwife who specializes in bereavement will contact you via telephone to guide you through the bereavement process. You will also receive a letter following your discharge home with further support information and contact details for voluntary groups.

If you would like to see them or discuss anything with them at any point please contact them via email at [yhs-tr.bereavement.midwives@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.bereavement.midwives@nhs.net) and leave a message. They will contact you on their next working day.

The bereavement team will also send you a questionnaire to allow you to feedback on any aspect of your care. If you would like a response to this, please include your details on the questionnaire otherwise it is anonymous.

If you have not met the bereavement officer during your stay they will contact you after a few days. Alternatively, you may want to contact them.

Once discharged home the bereavement officers can keep you informed about your baby's funeral arrangements.

## **Can I get any emotional support?**

Reactions to grief are very important. You and your partner may experience differing emotions/feelings at the same time.

Contact details for the Miscarriage Association and other voluntary organizations are in the back of this booklet.

You could also download the Sands bereavement support app on: [www.sands.org.uk/app](http://www.sands.org.uk/app).

You may prefer to discuss support with your GP.

If there is anything you think we may be able to help you with, please ask – we are here to help and support you at this difficult time.

## **Useful telephone numbers**

Patient Advice and Liaison Service  
(PALS)

01904 726262

## **York Hospital Contacts**

Women's unit

01904 726869

Bereavement Services

01904 725445

Labour Ward

01904 726869  
(option 3)

Midwife Support

Email: [yhs-tr.bereavement.midwives@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.bereavement.midwives@nhs.net)

Chaplaincy

01904 725579

(Office hours/ voicemail)

## **Scarborough Hospital Contacts**

Switch board

01723 368111

Labour Ward

01723 236869  
(option 3)

Bereavement Services

01723 385178

Midwife Support

Email: [yhs-tr.bereavement.midwives@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.bereavement.midwives@nhs.net)

Chaplaincy

01723 342500

# **National Support Organisations**

## **Miscarriage Association**

A national organisation set up by parents who have been through the pain of miscarriage.

[www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk)

Helpline: 01924 200 799

## **Twins Trust (Previously known as TAMBA)**

Bereavement Support Group

For parents who have lost one or both twins or more from multiple birth.

[www.twinstrust.org](http://www.twinstrust.org) Helpline: 01252 332 344.

## **Stillbirth and Neonatal Death (SANDS)**

National helpline open Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm.

Telephone number 020 7436 5881.

[www.sands.org.uk](http://www.sands.org.uk)

**British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)** Help and advice finding an accredited counsellor in your area.  
Telephone: 01455 883300

**(IAPT)**

Improving access to psychological therapies.  
[www.northyorkshireiapt.co.uk](http://www.northyorkshireiapt.co.uk)

**Cruse Bereavement Care**

An organisation to enable anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss.  
[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)  
Helpline: 0844 477 9400

**The Child Bereavement Charity**

The charity provides support and information to all affected by the death of a baby or child.  
[www.childbereavement.org.uk](http://www.childbereavement.org.uk)  
Helpline: 01494 568 900

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

B Shelley, Bereavement Midwife,  
York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.



# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

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