

For UK families experiencing early pregnancy loss

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

Saving babies' lives.
Supporting bereaved families.

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

This guide is designed to help you understand the examinations that may be offered to you following pregnancy loss or the death of a baby before 22 weeks of gestation.



Contents:



Placental examination – page 4

Hospital post-mortem – page 5

Recurrent miscarriage – page 6

Sands Bereavement Support Information – page 7

Placental Examination



You may be offered an examination of the placenta (also called placental histology). The placenta connects you to your baby in the womb. Examining the placenta may help explain why your baby died. Staff at the hospital can answer any questions you have about a placental exam and how long it should take. **Placental exams are optional**

Getting your results

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

Hospital Post-Mortem



A hospital post-mortem is an examination of your baby's body which may help understand why they died. A senior member of staff will explain the different types of post-mortem available for your baby and will ask which type you agree to. This is called post-mortem consent. You can ask any questions you need to ensure you make the right decision for you. Unfortunately, a post-mortem might not always tell you why your baby died.

Hospital post-mortems are optional. It is entirely your decision whether your baby has one.

Getting your results

It often takes several months to get the post-mortem results. The time it takes varies from hospital to hospital. The person who does the post-mortem consent can tell you how long it may take to get the report to you.

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

Recurrent miscarriage

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



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

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

Saving babies' lives.
Supporting bereaved families.



Free helpline 0808 164 3332



Email helpline@sands.org.uk



Sands support chat via our website sands.org.uk