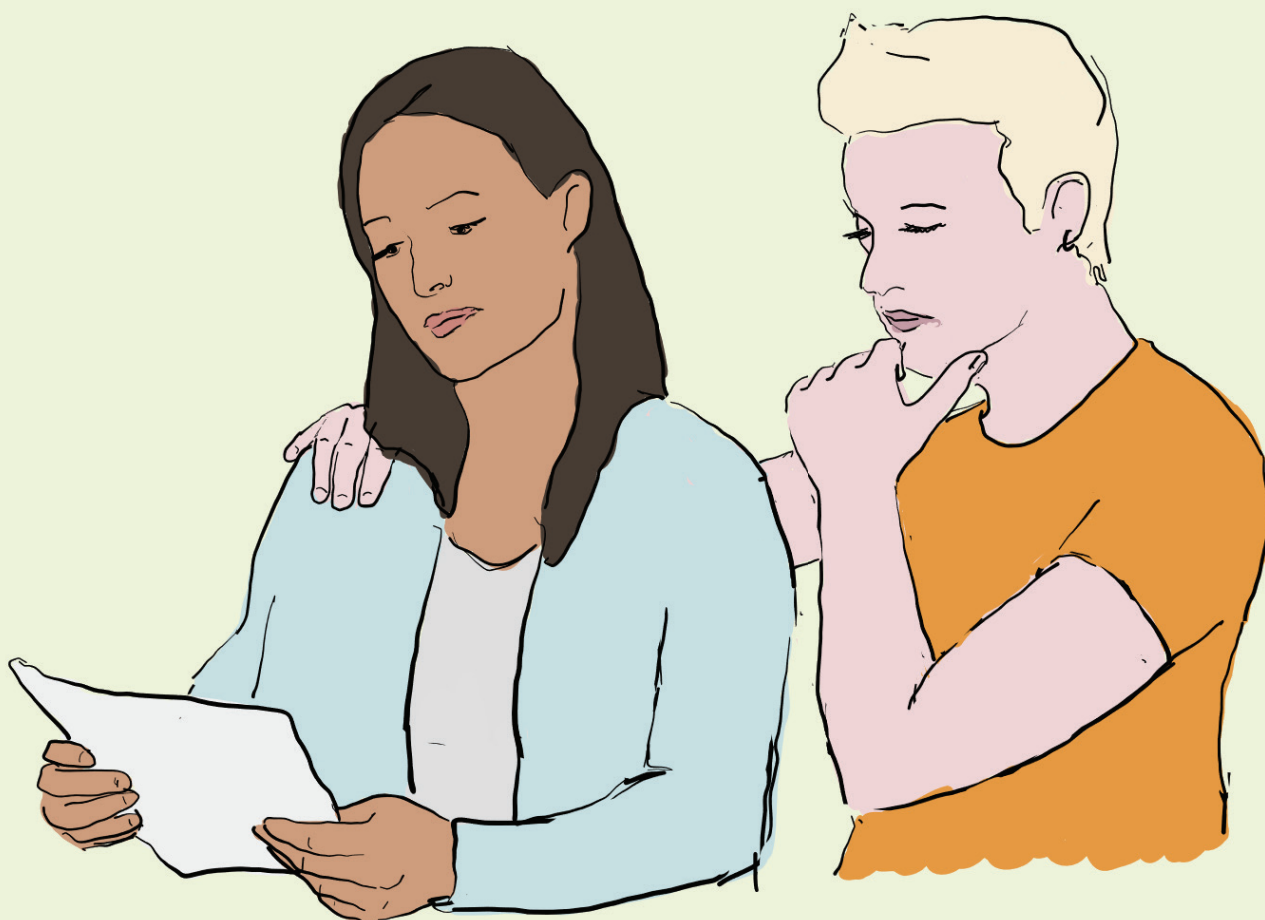
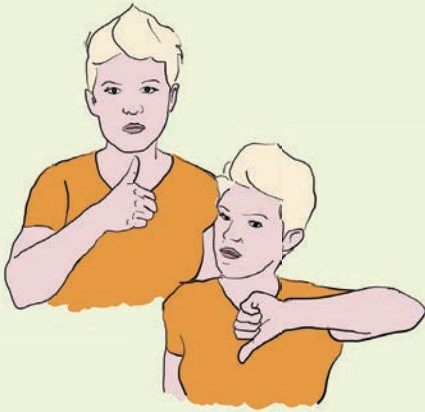




Understanding why your baby died



Understanding why your baby died



Some people want to know why their baby died and some people don't.



Hospitals and doctors don't always know why a baby has died.



There are 2 things hospitals can do to find out why it happened:

1. A **post-mortem**. This is when doctors look at your baby's body

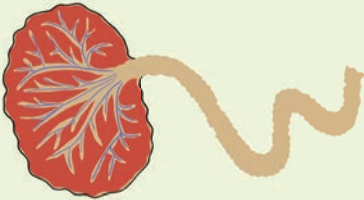


2. A **review**. This is when staff look at how doctors and midwives looked after you and your baby

About a post-mortem



In a post mortem, doctors will look at your baby's body. They will do some tests to try to find out what happened.



They will also test your **placenta**. While your baby is in your tummy it is attached to a placenta. The placenta helps your baby to grow.



It can be upsetting to think about having a post-mortem on your baby.



You can watch a short video about post-mortems at this website:

www.sands.org.uk/professionals/professional-resources/held-in-our-hearts-parent-parent-post-mortem-authorisation

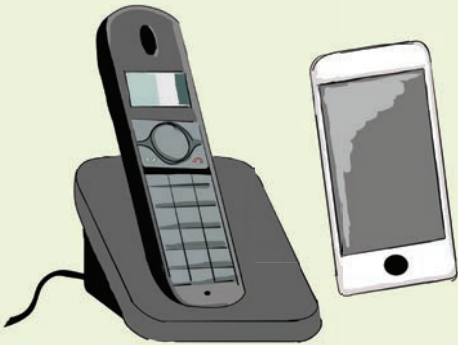


If you are unsure about having a post-mortem, you can talk to:

- doctors and midwives at the hospital



- your friends and family



- the Sands Helpline

Phone us:

0808 164 3332

When a post-mortem happens



Post-mortems are done a few days after your baby has died.



Sometimes your baby might need to be taken to a different hospital for the post-mortem.



If you need to have a funeral for your baby quickly, please tell the hospital staff.

Agreeing to have a post-mortem



Staff will ask you if you agree to a post-mortem on your baby. If you agree, it is ok to change your mind.



You can agree to a full post-mortem or a part post-mortem.



A full post-mortem looks at all of your baby's body and your placenta.

It can give you a lot of information about why your baby died.



You might not want the hospital to do a full post-mortem.

You can ask them to do a part post-mortem instead.



This is when you ask them to just look at part of your baby or just look at your placenta.



You might not get as much information from a part post-mortem.



Hospitals do not need to ask permission to do tests on your placenta. But they should tell you first.



Law

Sometimes the law might say there has to be a post-mortem.



This might be when:

- your baby died after it was born

and



- the hospital does not know why your baby died



Your doctor will speak to you if they need to do some extra tests.

Before a post-mortem



You can have time with your baby before the post-mortem.



This might be in the hospital or at home. The hospital will tell you how long you can have.



You can send special things with your baby to the post-mortem. Things like blankets or teddies.

What a post-mortem might tell you

A post-mortem might be able to tell you:



- why your baby died



- if the same thing might happen if you had another baby in the future

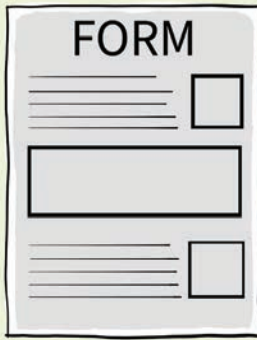


- if your baby had a problem that other people in your family might have



- if your baby was a boy or a girl. Staff will only tell you if you want to know

After a post-mortem



After a post-mortem, you will get a form. You will need this form to arrange a funeral.



You will get a report of the post-mortem. It will tell you what the doctors found out.



It might take up to 12 weeks to get a copy of the report.

Reviews



There should be a review for every baby who has died after 22 weeks of pregnancy. Or if a baby dies just after it is born.

A review means looking at the care you got:

- when you were pregnant
- when you were having your baby
- after your baby died, if your baby died very soon after being born





A hospital review

A hospital review looks at the care you got from the hospital.



In the weeks after your baby died, the hospital will have a meeting with you.



At the meeting, the hospital will:

- try to understand what happened and why your baby died



- try to answer any questions you have



- look at any test results. For example, from a post-mortem



- talk to any staff who looked after you when you were in hospital



- look at the hospital rules



After the review, the hospital might decide to change how they give care.

It might stop the same thing from happening to other babies in the future.



Your feelings are very important.

You should be able to share your thoughts and feelings at the meeting.
You should be able to ask questions.



After the meeting, the hospital will give you a **key review contact**. This is someone for you to talk to about the review.



Your key review contact will:

- call you 10 days after the meeting to let you know what is happening
- ask you if you have any more questions
- tell you how you can share your thoughts and feelings with the hospital



It can take a long time to get all the information after the review meeting.



A special doctor will write a report about what they found out in the review. The report will try to say what happened and why your baby died.



You can have another meeting at the hospital. You can talk about what the report says.



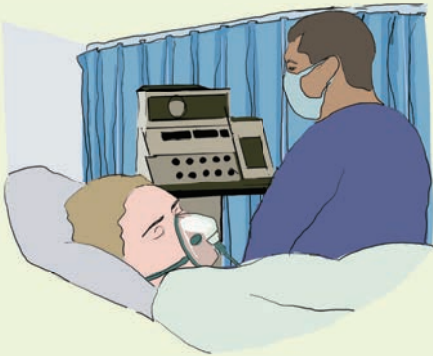
The hospital can send you a copy of the report by post or by email.

Other reviews



Sometimes as well as the hospital review there might be another kind of review. These are called investigations.

A Serious Incident Investigation



Your baby might have died because something went wrong with your care.



If this has happened, the hospital will do an important review called an **NHS Serious Incident Investigation**.



This review shows if the hospital has done anything wrong.

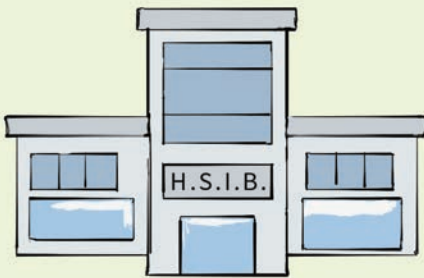
A Healthcare Safety Investigation



If your baby died after 37 weeks of pregnancy, there might be an **independent** investigation.



Independent means people who do not work for the hospital will look at what happened.



The investigation is done by the **Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch**. This is called **HSIB** for short.

Telling a coroner your baby has died

When a baby dies just after being born, the law says the hospital must:

- tell the **coroner** if the hospital is in England, Wales or Northern Ireland
- tell the **Procurator Fiscal** if the hospital is in Scotland.



The coroner and Procurator Fiscal are a type of judge who looks into why people have died.



The coroner or Procurator Fiscal might say there has to be a post-mortem on your baby.



The coroner or Procurator Fiscal might say there has to be an **inquest**.

An **inquest** is an important investigation in a court. It looks at why your baby has died and what happened.



The coroner or Procurator Fiscal will write a report about what they find out.