

# When A Baby Dies



Support booklet for  
Teens and Young People



## Why did our baby die?

Sometimes babies are born too soon because they have not grown properly through pregnancy.

Sometimes babies arrive months before they are due to be born and are so very, very tiny that they can't survive.

Sometimes they are too poorly and their body stopped working. This can't be fixed.

They can't feel anything, they aren't in pain.

There was nothing you could have done.

It's not your fault.

You will remember them



## How are you feeling?

When someone dies we can feel lots of feelings, many can come at the same time, or some days we can feel none at all.

You may find that you feel

**Scared**

**Worried**

**Anxious**

**Confused**

**Guilty**

**Tired**

**Helpless**

**Sad**

**Overwhelmed**

**Numb**

**Resentful**

**Isolated**

**Angry**

This is a natural part of grief and you may experience some new emotions that you haven't felt before. Talk to someone if you are unsure of your feelings. They can be unsettling at first.



## How do I move forward?

Experiencing the loss of a baby in a family unit can be an awful shock at first. We want to support you at this difficult time and help you think about the future. Learning ways to manage your grief over time can be really beneficial. It means that when things get tough, you'll know what to do. This booklet will help you work out what helps you.

## Going back to school/at school

If you have had time off, you may find going back to school is a big step. On one hand you may want to see your friends and get back into a routine, but on the other hand you may feel that you want to hide away and be on your own. Everyone is different.

You might find it helpful to think about how you would like to manage returning to school. Or how would like your class to be told of your loss. Would you like the teachers to tell the class? Would you like to tell your friends yourself? Would you like to speak to people as a group or individually? You may even feel that you don't want to tell people – but if others don't know, they won't be able to offer you help, kindness and support.

If people know you are going through a difficult time, they may not understand but they can still be there to support you and listen.

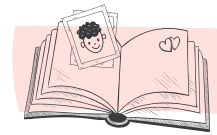




## Look after your mind and body

Looking after your self as you grieve is so important. Mindfulness, health and wellbeing are all important for your mental health. In combining these areas, you can feel confident going forward.

Here are some ways to look after your mind and your body.



## Create a memory box or scrapbook

Making a memory box or a scrapbook for a baby you may not have met, or only met a few times, can be really hard. But you don't need lots of photos and keepsakes to make a scrapbook or memory box. You can use drawings and comics to decorate your scrapbook, you can fill it with things that you think they'd have liked or you can write about who you think they'd have been. You can always make memories, even though they aren't here. Whenever you feel sad, you can look in the box, think and remember them. Be creative! Make collages, write songs, create a film strip of your story, poems and letters. This is a great way to work out how you're feeling, helping you to remember them while allowing your mind to process things.





## Connect with others

Finding out how other young people felt when they were bereaved and sharing experiences can help you feel less alone. You may know someone in your school who has been through a similar experience. You may find a group you can join, or reach out online to support services that are specifically for young people.

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## Meditation and breathing

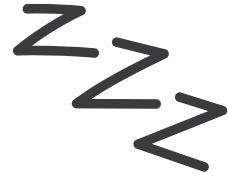


Meditation and breathing techniques can really help when you're feeling overwhelmed, anxious or stressed.

Find a comfy place and sit or lie down. Grab a teddy or pillow and place it on your chest or stomach. Close your eyes and breathe in and out, feeling the teddy/pillow rise and fall. This will hopefully help you feel calmer. If you can't do this then take three deep breaths: breathe in for three seconds, hold your breath for three seconds and breathe out for three seconds, and repeat.



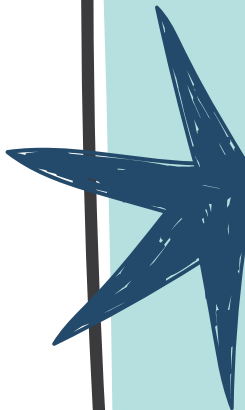
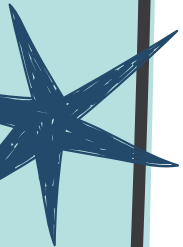
## Sleep



Sleep is so important for the body and mind. Finding it hard to sleep is a normal grief reaction but not sleeping properly can affect our lives.

### Here are some tips to help you sleep:

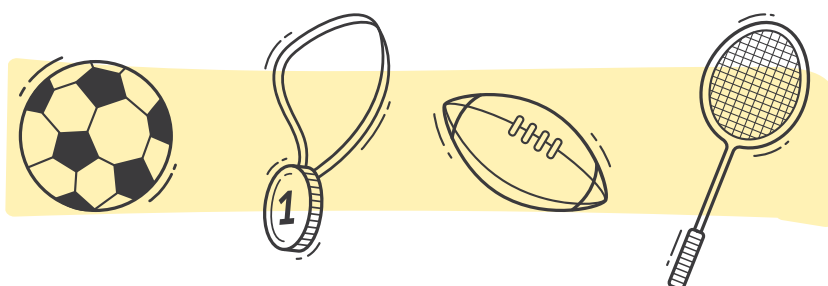
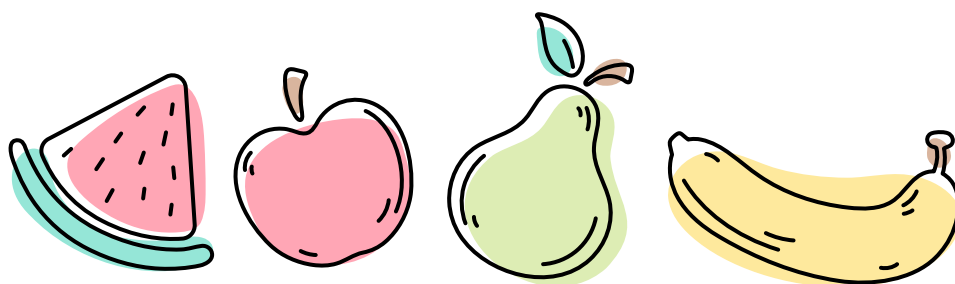
- 1 Don't use any screens (TV, tablet, phone) for one hour before bed.
- 2 Write down anything that is worrying you or talk to someone. Emptying your head of any difficult thoughts can help you sleep better.
- 3 Try a guided meditation or the simple breathing technique given above.
- 4 Read before bed - the repetitive eye movements help you to feel sleepy.
- 5 Try some soothing relaxation music or sleep sounds – don't forget to set a timer!
- 6 Don't worry about not sleeping. If you accept that you're still awake and try the above, you will find what works best for you and eventually you will drift off to sleep.





## Healthy diet

Eating a balanced diet is so important to keep your body healthy. This means eating across all the food groups - including fruit and vegetables! By eating healthily, your body receives the good minerals and vitamins it needs to have a healthy mind too.



## Exercise

Exercise is important for your mind and body. It gets your blood pumping and releases those good chemicals called endorphins.

Exercise in any way that you can - it can take many forms. You could swim, practise yoga, rugby, tennis, football or boxing.

Joining a group is a great way to spend time having fun with your friends old and new.



## Get support

The following resources may help you:

### Young Minds UK

Supporting young people's mental health with practical tips and advice.

### Winston's Wish

Supporting bereaved children, families and professionals. Providing emotional and practical bereavement support.



### Child Bereavement UK

Providing support, information and guidance in person and telephone.

### Grief Encounter

Providing free, professional and specialist support services to children and young people.

### Hope Again

Offering online support, advice and signposting to children and young people under 25.

