

# Information for patients and carers

## Your options following your early pregnancy loss

A guide for parents and families



## Following your pregnancy loss

We would like to offer you and your family our sincere condolences at this difficult time. Please know that our thoughts are with you.

This leaflet explains what will happen next and details the choices you have.

## Terminology used in this leaflet

**Pregnancy tissue** – the remains of the pregnancy, which may include the developing fetus (baby) and placenta.

Terms such as **products of conception**, are used by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), Tommy's and the Miscarriage Association.

**Histology** – the process of looking at tissue samples under a microscope to confirm a diagnosis.

**Genetic testing** – testing the genetic material of the pregnancy tissue to identify any hereditary conditions (only undertaken in specific circumstances).

**Sensitive Disposal** – Burial or cremation.

## Will I need histology or genetic testing?

We may recommend that your pregnancy tissue is sent for histology or genetic testing to confirm certain diagnoses:

- Ectopic pregnancy – to confirm that a pregnancy was present within the fallopian tube
- Miscarriage – where a developing baby was not seen on the ultrasound scan
- Recurrent miscarriage/pregnancy loss – to enable specialised testing to be performed in certain circumstances, your nurse or doctor will explain more if this applies to you

- Molar pregnancy – where the pregnancy has not developed normally
- Retained products of conception – where pregnancy tissue has remained inside the womb for a length of time and a surgical procedure is required to remove it

## Do I have to have histology?

Your nurse or doctor will discuss with you whether histology is recommended and the implications of your decision. Any investigations will be carried out with your consent. Where you have experienced a very early pregnancy loss, there may be little or no tissue left following the histology testing, in which case there may not be any tissue left for sensitive disposal.

## When will I receive the results?

The timing of results for any histology can vary. Histology testing usually takes up to two months and genetic testing up to four months for results to be available.

## What are my options following my pregnancy loss?

After a pregnancy loss and any histology/genetic testing that you have agreed to, the following options for what will happen to the remaining pregnancy tissue are:

1. You may arrange a private funeral by contacting a funeral director of your choice. Most private providers offer this at either no cost or at a reduced cost. You would discuss your preferences directly with your chosen funeral director. These will include cremation, with or without ashes or a burial.

Please note that collection of your pregnancy tissue for private burial or cremation needs to be arranged with the mortuary within 10 weeks of your pregnancy loss. If you have not arranged for collection by 12

weeks, then the pregnancy tissue will respectfully be cremated on your behalf.

2. The hospital can offer cremation on your behalf. This would be a shared cremation. Unfortunately, it would not be possible for you or your family to attend the cremation and you would not receive any remains or ashes. You will be asked to sign a consent form if this is your preference.

Alternatively, you can choose to take the pregnancy tissue home for burial, the following requirements must be adhered to:

- The burial must not cause danger to others
- It must not interfere with any rights other people may have on the land
- There must be no danger to water supplies or water courses
- There must be no chance of bodily fluids leaking onto adjoining land
- The pregnancy tissue must be buried to a depth of at least 45cm (18 inches)
- Permission must be obtained from the freeholder if you do not own the land
- Careful thought needs to be given when considering burial in a garden, considering what would happen if you decided to move house
- When you have decided, you will be asked to sign a consent form confirming your wishes

## Where can I find additional support?

There are several services available to those affected including partners, siblings, grandparents by early pregnancy loss. Some of the resources below may be able to offer counselling or support groups. Alternatively, you can speak to your General Practitioner.

**Sands** - <https://www.Sands.org.uk/support-you>

**Miscarriage association** – <https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/>

**NHS Miscarriage** - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/miscarriage/>  
**Tommy's** - <https://www.tommys.org/baby-loss-support/miscarriage-information-and-support/recurrent-miscarriage>  
**Cradle** – <https://cradlecharity.org/>

You are invited to attend a 'Remembrance Service' held throughout the year for all those who have experienced the loss of a pregnancy or baby.

Please contact the Early Pregnancy Bereavement Nurse on **07845665608** for the next service date.

## Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

Gynaecology and Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit (triage 24/7):  
**01772 524415**

Early Pregnancy Bereavement Nurse: **07845665608**

Mortuary (Mon-Fri 0800-1600): **01772 523562**

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)  
[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)  
[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware)

**Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management** -  
<https://www.iccm-uk.com/iccm/>

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[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**.

**Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.**

**This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

[patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk)

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