

Taking home early pregnancy remains (up to 14 weeks)

Information for patients



Leeds Centre for
Women's Health

Introduction

This information is for you if you are thinking about taking your pregnancy remains home to bury yourself in a place that is not recognised for this (not a cemetery or churchyard). You can ask a funeral director to help if you wish.

This information leaflet only applies to pregnancies that have ended up to 14 weeks of pregnancy. It explains the process you need to follow if you want to be responsible for the pregnancy remains. You need to understand some of the important consequences of your decisions to make sure they are right for you in the long term.

Are there any legal requirements?

The law does not require you to register a baby that is not born alive before 24 weeks' of pregnancy. There are no specific legal requirements when thinking about burial in your own garden.

It is recommended that the pregnancy remains is buried in the water tight material to minimise any risk of leakage and compassionately placed into biodegradable cardboard casket. It will degrade eventually and you should not expect or try to dig it up.

Where to bury the casket?

There are a number of recommendations and points to be considered when thinking about where to bury the remains. These are:

- Danger must not be caused to others.
- It must not interfere with any rights that others have on the land.
- There must be no danger to water supplies or water courses.
- There must be no chance of fluids leaking into or onto adjoining land.
- The burial should take place at a depth greater than 24" / 60cms.
- Permission should be gained from the landowner before the burial.

If you plan to bury the pregnancy remains in a garden at home you may want to consider:

- What would your wishes be for the burial site if you were to move house, or if in the future the land were to be used for a new purpose?
- Alternatives to garden burial include burial in a planted pot, which you can move with you should you move home.

How will the tissue be returned to me?

You will need to sign a consent form that allows the pregnancy remains to be returned to you. The pregnancy remains can be released directly from the Gynaecology Acute Treatment Unit. It will be wrapped in absorbent biodegradable material to minimise any risk of leakage, and compassionately placed into biodegradable cardboard casket.

If you have chosen to have an assessment of the pregnancy remains (where the pregnancy remains is sent to the laboratory and pathology doctors look at the remains by eye and under a microscope) there will be a delay in being able to take the pregnancy remains home. Once the histopathology assessment is complete, you will be contacted and the pregnancy remains will be released. You or a named family member may collect pregnancy remains from the Bereavement Office at St James's University Hospital.

Where there is little pregnancy remains, please be aware that the pregnancy tissue may be returned to you in small pieces on glass slides used for microscope examination.

Transport from hospital

You may find it hard to drive home with it yourself. If so please arrange for a relative or friend to drive you home.

What health and safety issues should I be aware of?

Please ensure that the pregnancy remains is kept in cold conditions until the time of the burial. It must not be kept in places where foodstuffs are stored, such as a domestic refrigerator or freezer. One option is to double wrap the pregnancy tissue container in plastic bags, place it in a bowl and surround it with ice or ice packs. Ideally, it should be buried within six hours of release from hospital.

What happens if I change my mind?

If you are unable to make the arrangements as planned, or no longer wish to deal with this yourself, you may contact either a Funeral Director or the Bereavement office at the hospital. Both of these places will be able to offer advice on other options available.

What if I can't make up my mind right now?

We understand that this is a very difficult time for you and will support you in whatever decision you eventually make. Staff will explain the options that are available to you. If you would like to talk to someone further about your decision then please speak to the nursing staff or contact the Bereavement Service on **0113 206 4069 Monday to Friday**.

Further information and Support

Gynaecology Acute Treatment Unit (GATU) (24 hours)

Level 2 Chancellor Wing, St James University Hospital,
Beckett Street, Leeds, LS9 7TF

Telephone: 0113 206 5724 (24 hours)

Bereavement Services, St James's University Hospital

Telephone: 0113 206 4069

Hospital Chaplain

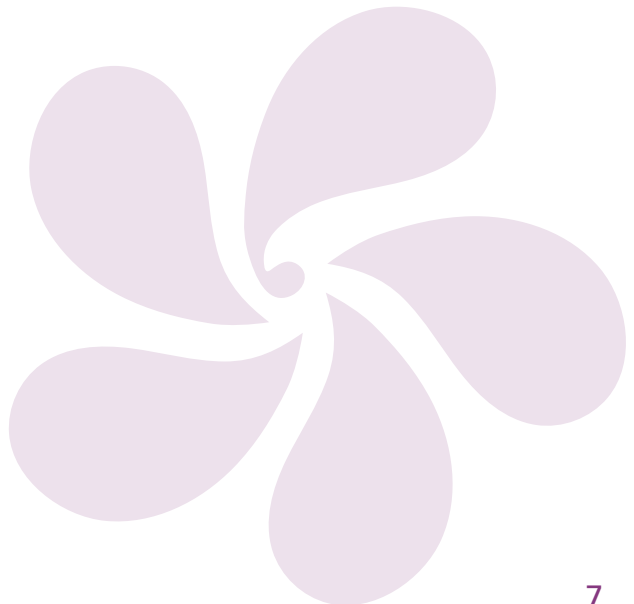
Telephone: 0113 243 3144 (via hospital Switchboard)

Useful resources

Miscarriage Association

Helpline: 0192 420 0799 (Monday to Friday 9am – 4pm)

Website: www.themiscarriageassociation.org.uk





What did you think of your care?

Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft

Your views matter



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