

Where can I go for support?

There are lots of organisations who are able to offer help and support and it is important to find support which works for you.

National Charities

SANDS

 www.sands.org.uk/
 0808 164 3332
 helpline@sands.org.uk

Child Bereavement UK

 www.childbereavementuk.org
 0800 02 888 40
 support@childbereavementuk.org

Child Death Helpline

 www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk
 0800 282986 or 0800 800 6019
 contact@childdeathhelpline.org.uk

Children of Jannah

 www.childrenofjannah.com

CRUSE Bereavement Support

 www.cruse.org.uk/

Lullaby Trust

 www.lullabytrust.org.uk/
 0808 802 6868

Petals

 www.petalscharity.org/counselling
 [contact/](mailto:contact@petalscharity.org)
 0300 688 0068
 counselling@petalscharity.org

Twins Trust

 twinstrust.org/bereavement.html

Local Counselling Services

Edwards Trust

Bereavement counselling for parents and siblings of babies who die.
 edwardstrust.org.uk/
 0121 454 1705
 admin@edwardstrust.org.uk

Lily Mae Foundation

Bereavement counselling following baby loss. Also access to support groups and other support.
 www.lilymaefoundation.org
 01676 535716
 BLSS@lilymaefoundation.org

Other support

Approachable Parenting

 approachableparenting.org
 07873432125

Kooth

Wellbeing and mental health support for young people
 www.kooth.com

Noah's Star

Local charity offering groups and activities for siblings
 noahsstar.org/

Winston's Wish

Bereavement support for siblings
 ask@winstonswish.org
 08088 020 021

Written by Dr. Gemma Holder
on behalf of



West Midlands
Perinatal Network



Breast Care After Loss

Your choices

If you are reading this leaflet after a miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of your baby after birth, we are very sorry for your loss.

This leaflet contains information about your breast care choices:

- Stopping your body producing milk
- Continuing to express
- Deciding what to do with milk that you have already expressed

Will my body make breast milk after my baby has died?

Your body will start making milk around the 16th week of pregnancy. After birth your body will undergo hormone changes and breast milk is made.

Some parents find the experience of producing milk painful, as it reminds them of their loss. Others find making and expressing breast milk comforting. There is no right or wrong way to feel.

This leaflet explains the options you have.

How do I stop my body producing milk?

It may take several weeks for your body to stop making milk. It's important that if your breasts fill with milk you don't express except for comfort. If you don't empty your breasts your body will stop making milk over the coming days and weeks. If you have been feeding or expressing for your baby it may take longer for your body to stop producing milk.

To avoid discomfort and inflammation, reduce your milk supply slowly. The best way to do this will depend on whether you have an established milk supply or are just starting to produce milk.

If you have been expressing regularly, cut back by two sessions per day to let your body adjust and enable your body to gradually produce less milk without discomfort.

If you are just starting to produce milk, hand expressing may help you feel more comfortable.

Other things that may help include:

- Wearing a well supporting bra (e.g. a sports bra)
- Sleeping on your back
- Using a cold compress for 15 -20 minutes (avoid using a hot compress)
- Contact your midwife or GP if you are experiencing pain or have any symptoms of a fever
- You may be offered the medicine Carbergoline to help stop milk production quickly, though it may not stop it completely. Like all medications, it may have side effects and may not be suitable for all lactating parents. Please discuss this with your midwife or bereavement team.

Continuing to express

I want to keep expressing. Can I donate my milk?

For some parents, expressing milk for donation can be comforting. Grief is a personal and complex experience, and this may not be the right choice for everyone. If you choose to continue expressing milk, you might want to explore the option of donating it. If this is something you wish to consider, your midwife or the bereavement team can give you more information.

Deciding what to do with milk that you have already expressed

If you have milk that you've already expressed, there are options available to you. You may choose one or a combination of these:

- A one off donation of your milk to a milk bank to help other babies or for research
- Keep a container for a keepsake
- Turn some into a permanent keepsake, for example breast milk jewellery. Many companies online offer this for a fee
- Ask the hospital to dispose of your milk if you do not wish to keep or donate it

