

Grief: Coping After Stillbirth

The grief of losing a baby is impossible to understand or describe. It is more than the loss of a unique person. It's also the loss of your plans and dreams for your baby and your family. And when a baby dies, the loss is felt by everyone involved in the baby's care.

So while you're at the hospital, let the staff care for you and your family as you want... and need them to. Many parents want to take pictures and keep a lock of hair. The hospital may take photographs or footprints for you. But you can also have time alone to hold, to touch, and to say goodbye to your baby.

Some parents have a ceremony, such as a christening or other blessing or a funeral service. The hospital staff may be able to help you plan or help you with arrangements. It's important to remember that you may want to do some of these things, but your partner or other people in your family may not.

And that's okay. Everyone grieves differently. There's no right or wrong way to grieve. Your health care team understands that you're going through a deeply personal experience, but if you want to talk or if you have questions, they are there for you.

And when you're ready and it's time to leave your baby, they will do everything they can to help and support you. When you're back at home, you may cry a lot. You may feel angry or hopeless.

You may blame yourself or someone else for what happened. It might be hard to eat or sleep. You may find that your grief is unpredictable and hard to control...with sad thoughts and feelings coming and going.

While you may want to isolate yourself from others and hold it all in, there are people around who care about you and want to help. They may not know how to help... so let them know what you need.

After a loss like this, many people talk to a grief counselor. Or... you may want to talk to others who "get it" because they've been through it. You can make connections to support groups online or in person.

Grief is a completely natural healing process that takes time. You don't have to go through it alone. Your family, your friends, and your care team want to help.

Everyone grieves in their own way, so it's important to do what you know in your heart is right for you...to take care of yourself