

# My Baby's Heartbeat Stopped

## What happens now?



The nurse who cared for me: \_\_\_\_\_

The doctor who cared for me: \_\_\_\_\_

The Maternity Unit phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

We are very sorry for your loss. This is a great shock and it is not your fault.

It can be difficult to think clearly at this time. We want to help you with your baby's birth, as well as with your initial hellos and goodbyes with your baby.

### **How do I know for sure my baby died?**

When you went for an ultrasound scan, your baby's heart was not beating. It is possible that you still sense the baby's movements inside – sometimes this happens. It is because your baby floats in water inside your womb (uterus).

### **What happens next?**

As long as it is safe for you, there is no rush for you to give birth to your baby. Some mothers want to go into labour right away. Other mothers prefer to go home for a while to be with family or friends and take in what has happened.

For most mothers, it is safest to labour and give birth naturally (vaginally) rather than by an operation (caesarean section).

### **How will I get into labour?**

Sometimes labour starts on its own. Other times, we need to give medicines to start (induce) labour. Mothers who prefer to go into labour right away might be able to stay in hospital and take those medicines as soon as possible.

If you decide to go home for a while, you can call the Maternity Unit when you feel ready to have labour started.

## **How will this labour differ from other labours?**

Your body will go through labour and birth the same way. To lessen pain, we can give you medicines through an injection either into a muscle or into a vein. Or you can have an epidural (where medicine is injected near your spine to 'freeze' or numb your lower abdomen, blocking feeling). Your nurse stays with you during your labour and your loved ones can be with you at all times.

## **What happens when my baby is born?**

Your baby can be placed directly into your arms, or your baby can be dried off and dressed. Tell your nurse what you prefer. It is okay to change your mind whenever you like. Your baby can stay with you as long as you want.

If you choose to name your baby, you can share the name with us so that we can refer to the baby by name.

When a baby does not cry at birth, the silence sometimes seems uncomfortable. Some families find it calming to have music playing softly during labour and delivery. You are welcome to play any music you have brought with you.

After your baby is born, the afterbirth (placenta) usually follows. Occasionally, the placenta needs to be removed in the operating room. You would be given medicine to sleep through this operation (general anesthetic).

We want to give you privacy with your baby and your loved ones. We also want to be there for you. Sometimes it is hard for us to know what you need or prefer. It is fine for you to tell us when you want the nurse to be present and when you want to be alone.

A social worker might meet with you while you are in hospital and offer help with emotional and practical concerns.

## **Will I be able to find out why my baby died?**

It is not always possible to find out what caused a baby to die.

Some tests might help give us an answer to this question, such as blood tests, examining the placenta, or an autopsy.

An autopsy can be done for babies who are over 20 week's into the pregnancy, but only if you agree (consent). Compared to the other tests, an autopsy gives the most useful information for a better understanding of why your baby died.

If a cause is found, it could make a difference to your care in a future pregnancy.

If you have any questions or concerns, speak to your nurse. If you are at home, call the Maternity Unit.

[www.fraserhealth.ca](http://www.fraserhealth.ca)

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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To order: [patienteduc@fraserhealth.ca](mailto:patienteduc@fraserhealth.ca)