



Government of **Western Australia**  
North Metropolitan Health Service  
Women and Newborn Health Service



# Pastoral Care Services

Following the loss  
of your baby



Pastoral Care is an integrated part of bereavement care at KEMH.

The core of our service is compassion, inclusivity and confidentiality. We offer care to all patients, regardless of faith, spirituality or beliefs.

This information comes to you at a time of loss when you may be feeling overwhelmed, unsure of what you need, what decisions you will have to make, or what is available to you.



A representative from the Pastoral Care team will meet with you to provide support, options for your baby and resources, according to your needs.

**These encompass:**

1. An opportunity to discuss your experience in a caring, confidential and respectful environment.
2. Opportunities for creating lasting memories of your baby.
3. Help to meet any spiritual or religious needs that you may have in relation to your loss.
4. The offer of appropriate rituals and services to commemorate your baby and give expression to the meanings that your baby has for you.
5. KEMH cremation or funeral information appropriate to your circumstances.
6. Help with other practicalities surrounding your loss.



## A service of Naming and Blessing or Acknowledgement

This is a short ritual, held in the patient's room or the KEMH Chapel, available to all who experience the loss of a baby. A certificate can also be given to the family.

## A Ritual of Remembrance

This is a small monthly service of healing following the loss of a pregnancy under 14 weeks gestation. The early loss of a pregnancy can occur quickly and unexpectedly and leave few reminders, yet for many, it is an experience of immense grief. This short ritual provides an opportunity to reflect, remember and acknowledge those who passed so briefly into and beyond our experience.

Services are held on the second Monday of each month at 12.30pm in the KEMH Chapel (Level 1, A Block), directly above the Main Entrance. During COVID restrictions, hand hygiene, social distancing and reduced numbers will be in place.



## KEMH Interment of Ashes service

A monthly gathering to inter (bury) the ashes of stillborn babies up to 28 weeks gestation. The babies are cremated together and their ashes are interred together.

**When:** Usually the last Thursday of each month (Pastoral Care Services will give you the exact date)

**Time:** 12.30pm

**Place:** Memorial Garden, corner Railway and Barker Roads, Subiaco.

- If you would like your baby to be included in this service, Pastoral Care will help you complete the Consent for Cremation form while you are an inpatient.
- Pastoral Care will provide you with an information brochure showing your baby's interment service date before you leave hospital.
- There is no cost for this service.
- Parents and family members are invited to participate in the service.
- Where requested, the names of babies included in the service are read out.
- After the service, the names of all whose ashes have been interred are recorded in a Register that is maintained by Pastoral Care Services.

In the event of COVID restrictions, please contact Pastoral Care for alternative arrangements.



## Separate Ashes

If you do not wish to inter your baby's ashes in the KEMH Memorial Garden, you can choose to have your baby cremated and collect the ashes from KEMH. Pastoral Care can help you record your choice on the Consent for Cremation form. If collecting your baby's ashes from Pastoral Care, expect to receive a phone call in about one to two weeks to arrange collection.

Collection hours are between 8.30am and 3.00pm on normal business days. An appointment is required. Come to the main entrance and ask reception for Pastoral Care. Please remember to bring your copy of the Consent for Cremation form and photo ID. Apart from the mother of the baby, ashes cannot be given to any person without the mother's signed permission.



## Funeral or Memorial Services

If your baby was stillborn at more than 28 weeks gestation or died any time after birth, the hospital (by law) is unable to cremate your baby and the services of a Funeral Director will be required. Pastoral Care will give you information in regard to this.

You may find it useful to have a discussion with a member of our team prior to phoning a funeral director. We are able to discuss options for planning a funeral for your baby. This way, when you contact a funeral director, you will be better placed to ensure that your needs are met.

Your baby's funeral is the last physical care you will give your baby. This is a time for well-informed and considered choices. Take your time; be led by your heart to do what you feel is best for you, your baby and your family. Our Pastoral Care team can assist and support you in this process.

Please see our other brochure, *Preparing for your Baby's Funeral*.

## Contact for Pastoral Care Services

While referral to our services for losses above 14 weeks gestation is routine, if you want further contact, or if you have any questions or concerns, you can telephone the Pastoral Care Services Department on (08) 6458 1726 or (08) 6458 1036.

Your Pastoral Care Representative is:

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## Grief Support Services

You may benefit from the services offered by external support agencies that are experienced in supporting people through grief. We recommend the following free services as a starting point for information and assistance:

**SANDS** for peer support

[www.sands.org.au](http://www.sands.org.au)

24 hours a day on 1300 072 637

**Red Nose Grief and Loss** for

professional counselling services

[www.rednosegriefandloss.com.au](http://www.rednosegriefandloss.com.au)

24 hours a day on 1300 308 307



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## Women and Newborn Health Service

King Edward Memorial Hospital

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🌐 [kemh.health.wa.gov.au](http://kemh.health.wa.gov.au)

Compiled by: Pastoral Care Services

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.