



**Saint Mary's Managed Clinical Service  
Division of Gynaecology**

**PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET**

**NORTH MANCHESTER GYNAECOLOGY  
HISTOPATHOLOGY EXAMINATION & RESPECTFUL  
DISPOSAL OF PREGNANCY REMAINS**

We are very sorry for your pregnancy loss; we appreciate that this must be a difficult time for you and others supporting you.

This leaflet explains the options you have around what happens to your pregnancy remains following a pregnancy loss. We would appreciate if you took some time to read the below information now. This is to avoid further distress or potentially upsetting conversations in the future.

**WHAT IS MEANT BY PREGNANCY LOSS**

A pregnancy loss may have occurred because of:

- A miscarriage – when a pregnancy ends unexpectedly before 24 weeks.
- An ectopic pregnancy – when a pregnancy develops outside the womb and cannot continue.
- Or it may be that you have had to make the difficult decision to end your pregnancy because of fetal abnormality.

The tissue from a pregnancy loss is often referred to as pregnancy remains. This is usually made up of the placenta, the lining of the womb and blood clots and if developed the embryo or fetus (developing baby).

**WHAT IS HISTOPATHOLOGY**

Histopathology involves examining the tissue from your pregnancy visually/under a microscope, to confirm pregnancy tissue and to rule out any abnormality which has not been previously identified. Unfortunately, despite histopathology it may still not be possible to establish the cause of your pregnancy loss. Histopathology examination is limited and often it can only confirm pregnancy tissue, or an ectopic pregnancy. However it can rule out or confirm a molar pregnancy, which is a rare complication of pregnancy requiring specialist follow up care and monitoring. Histopathology examination can not identify any genetic causes for a miscarriage.

**PROCEEDING WITH HISTOPATHOLOGY**

If you agree to this examination, the histopathologist (a specialist doctor who works in the laboratory) will select small samples of the pregnancy tissue for examination. We need to make you aware that chemical agents may be used during the process of examination to prevent deterioration of tissues.

Sometimes, when pregnancy remains are examined an embryo or fetus is seen, we would like to reassure you this will be left as it has been seen and will not be examined.

The testing process usually takes 4-8 weeks but can take up to 12 weeks in some cases. Following testing the small samples of tissue examined will be retained by the hospital as part of your medical records.

Once testing is complete, the results are reported and shared with your clinician/gynaecology clinical team. If an abnormality has been found, you will be contacted to inform you of these findings and further follow up will be arranged as appropriate. We aim to inform you of any abnormalities and refer you for specialist follow up within 7 days of receiving the results.

## WHAT HAPPENS WITH MY PREGNANCY REMAINS AFTER HISTOPATHOLOGY?

Following testing we need to know how you wish us to proceed with the pregnancy remains (this is the tissue that is not being retained as part of your medical records). This section will discuss the options available. However, if you have any questions, please discuss these with the nurse or doctor involved in your care.

- The hospital can arrange for the respectful disposal of residual pregnancy remains, from Royal Oldham Hospital's Histopathology department.
- You may wish to make your own private arrangements for burial or cremation, this would be at your own cost. If you would like to do this, please inform your nurse or doctor. Following examination, your pregnancy remains will be sent back to North Manchester General Hospital Mortuary. Please contact the Mortuary directly on (0161) 720 2255 to arrange collection. Please be aware it will be a period of 6-8 weeks before contacting Mortuary to arrange collection.

## DECLINING HISTOPATHOLOGY

You also have the choice to decline histopathology examination. You may take pregnancy remains home with you (your nurse/doctor will discuss this process with you). You may wish to make your own private arrangements for burial or cremation, your pregnancy remains will be transferred to NMGH Mortuary and will await your instruction for collection. Nurses will provide a pink slip with details of this process.

## CONSENT

Your nurse or doctor will ask you to sign a consent form detailing how you wish us to proceed with the tissue from your pregnancy loss. We understand that this may be distressing, however your consent needs to be clearly documented to enable us to carry out your wishes and prevent any misunderstanding.

## FURTHER SUPPORT

If you have further questions, please speak to your nurse or contact the early pregnancy loss specialist nurse or relevant department using the contact details below.

## CONTACT DETAILS



### **Early Pregnancy Loss Specialist Nurse**

Please leave a voicemail message with your name and contact number or you can send us an email. The nurse will aim to return your call or email within 1-3 working days. For any urgent queries please contact the emergency gynaecology unit or the ward you were discharged from.



07814056869 – message service



[earlypregnancyloss.nurse@mft.nhs.uk](mailto:earlypregnancyloss.nurse@mft.nhs.uk)



### **Gynaecology Assessment Unit**

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