

*Oh God,*

*This hour revives in us memories of loved ones who are no more.*

*What happiness we shared when they walked among us!*

*What joy, when, loving and loved, we lived our lives together!*

*Their memory is a blessing forever.*

*Months or years have passed, yet we feel near to them.*

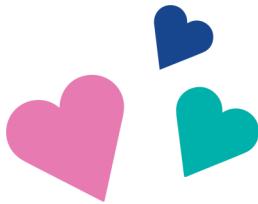
*Our hearts yearn for them.*

*Though the bitter grief has softened, a duller pain abides, for the place where once they stood is empty now forever.*

*The links of life are broken.*

*But the links of love and longing cannot break.*

*Their souls are bound up in ours forever.*



#### Our Mission:

Healing Hearts Infant Bereavement Resources provides support services for families that have experienced the death of their infant, due to any cause, through outreach and home visits.

In addition to monthly support meetings, a licensed social worker and a peer contact telephone network are available on a 24-hour basis. These services enable new parents to discuss the grief they are experiencing with someone who has suffered the same loss.

Support for grieving siblings is available through *The Highmark Caring Place*. We are proud to be one of the founding members of *The Highmark Caring Place*, where children are provided with a caring and safe place, staffed by professionals and trained volunteers, to express feelings and share experiences in ways that promote their recovery and personal growth.

If you need further information about our services, please contact us at (888)721-2742 ext. 4, or in the Pittsburgh area at (412) 322-5680 ext. 4.

**Healing Hearts  
Infant Loss Support Group**  
*a service of*  
**Cribs for Kids® Infant Safe Sleep Initiative**

[www cribsforkids org/healingheartsinfantbereavementresources](http://www cribsforkids org/healingheartsinfantbereavementresources)  
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## Infant Loss Support Group

*For Families Who Have  
Experienced  
the Loss of an Infant*

When your baby dies, your life is changed forever. You might feel shock, anger, disbelief, and intense sorrow. How do you pick up the pieces of your life and go on?

Following are some steps you can take that may ease the first days and weeks after your baby's death.

### **Reach Out to Friends and Family**

Talk to a friend, family member, or minister. Tell them about your baby's death and the last days of his or her life. Share loving memories you have of your baby. Be assured that it is normal to feel anger and sorrow and disbelief, sometimes all at once. Being with others who love you and your baby will help you get through the first days following your loss.

### **Do Something Positive in your Baby's Memory**

In the weeks following your infant's death, shock and numbness begin to wear off. You may begin to grapple with the intensity of your feelings of anger and sorrow. You may feel restless — uncomfortable in your own skin. Creating ways to remember your baby can provide an outlet for these feelings. Some ideas are:

- Start a journal. Write about the happy memories of your baby. Describe the feelings you have now.
- Plant a tree in your child's name.
- Donate a children's book to your local library.
- Donate baby items to your hospital's pediatric or NICU departments
- Write a poem and frame it with a picture of your baby.
- Bronze your baby's shoes.
- Make a shadow box of special items that remind you of your baby.



- Put together a scrapbook and journal your feelings and memories next to the pictures.

Nothing can bring your baby back. But taking small (or big) actions in memory of your baby not only acknowledges your baby's life, but can provide comfort to you as well.

### **Follow Up with Your Medical Team**

When your infant dies, sorrow plunges you into shock. It is impossible, in the first days after your baby's death to think of all the questions you'll want to ask. Set up an appointment with your pediatrician. Make sure your pediatrician has all medical records, autopsy, pathology, and toxicology reports on your baby and is prepared to answer your questions. Talk to anyone who cared for your baby in the last days or hours of your baby's life. It's important to answer the questions that will help you understand why your infant died.

### **Take Care of Yourself**

Grieving the death of your baby may be the most exhausting and difficult experience you will have in your life. Take care of yourself. Get plenty of rest. Eat three times a day. And exercise. Even just a walk through your neighborhood or a nearby park will help your body process the intense burden of grief that you carry.

### **Allow Yourself Time and Tears**

There is no timetable for grief. Allow yourself to experience all your feelings in your own time. Ignore comments that tell you how you should feel ("Don't you think you should be over it?") or pressure you to move faster through your grief than you are able.

Give yourself permission to heal. When you find yourself having a good day and then maybe a week with more than one good day, which is a positive sign. Healing does not mean forgetting your child — you will always carry your child in your heart. You can learn to live again, and in doing so you honor your child by carrying their memory out into your life.

### **Healing Hearts Infant Loss Support Group**

This support group is for families who have experienced the loss of an infant due to any cause. You are welcome to attend no matter how long it has been since your loss. You may choose to talk or just listen; there is no fee or registration required. If you would like to share with other parents who have experienced the death of an infant, the group meets:

**When:** The first Tuesday of each month  
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

**Where:** 5450 Second Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15207

Call (412) 322-5680 ext. 4 with any questions or to speak with someone about your feelings.

