

STILLBIRTHS, FETAL AND NEONATAL DEATHS – POST DELIVERY CARE AND CREATION OF MEMORABILIA

This LOP is developed to guide clinical practice at the Royal Hospital for Women. Individual patient circumstances may mean that practice diverges from this LOP.

1. AIM

- Sympathetic and appropriate care of the mother and baby
- Creation of memorabilia
- Support of parent/s in their choices regarding viewing and care of their baby

2. PATIENT

- Woman who has had a fetal death, stillbirth or a neonatal death

3. STAFF

- Medical, midwifery and nursing staff
- Student Midwives
- Social Workers

4. EQUIPMENT

- Digital camera
- Identification bands
- Baby wraps
- Specimen bucket and bag for placenta
- Ink pad for foot and handprints
- Memory booklet
- Baby garment pack

5. CLINICAL PRACTICE

- Refer woman to social work department as early as possible to provide support, counselling and resources for the family
 - Extension 26670 in business hours
 - Weekends and public holidays on-call roster operates between 08:00 – 17:00hours, contact through switchboard
- Offer parents opportunity to see and hold their baby. When parents express concern about the appearance of their baby, it is always possible to:
 - describe the appearance (including any abnormality)
 - take a photograph and show it to the parents as a first step
 - slowly unwrap the baby to reveal the abnormality
- Respect parents' choice to not see/hold their baby, informing them that they may change their mind, and viewing can be facilitated at any time post birth

Midwifery Responsibilities

- Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times when handling babies
- Clean the baby either by wiping down or by bathing baby, with or without parents present (whichever they prefer)
- Ensure the cord clamp is in position and identification bands are completed and placed around both ankles
- Record weight, length and where possible head circumference on cot card. Name (sex when known or baby greater than >20weeks gestation and easily identifiable), date and time of birth to be on identification bands

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- Dress and wrap baby in appropriate clothing as discussed with parents
- Obtain parents' consent for photographs and document. Take photographs of baby if comfortable and time permits
- Discuss with the family what other opportunities they would wish for creation of memories, e.g. blessing ceremony, bathing/dressing baby in viewing room, etc. It is important to offer such opportunities sensitively and at the family's own pace
- Offer cold cot if parents wish to keep baby for > 4hours post birth (see appendix 1)
- When parents ready for baby to be transported to the morgue. Wrap the baby in a cot sheet, then if needed a blue incontinence sheet to capture any fluid loss, followed by baby blanket
- Ensure woman is cared for postnatally as per usual postnatal pathway

Social Work Responsibilities

- Inform midwife of previous discussion with parents about their wishes and creation of memorabilia
- Visit parents at appropriate time (pre or post birth) once admitted (as advised by midwife)
- Discuss mementos and offer additional services e.g. chaplaincy, Heartfelt
- Take photographs with consent. Once photographs complete, take hand and foot prints
- Cut lock of hair where possible/appropriate
- Print selected photographs and download all photographs to UBS
- Collate all memorabilia as discussed with parents
- Provide information about funerals, viewing and social work follow-up

6. DOCUMENTATION

- Medical record

7. EDUCATIONAL NOTES

- Garment packs and wraps appropriate to gestation are available in birthing services and social work department
- Be aware that cultural and religious practices may require different modes of post-natal care for woman and baby
- Chaplaincy is available within the hospital. Contact list available at Birth Unit main desk
- Use of cold cot strongly advised if baby going for postmortem and parents wish to keep baby with them for > 4 hours post birth. Baby must be kept in cold cot when not being held by family. Laying the baby on its back with only one layer of clothing between baby and cold pad. See Cuddle Cold Cot instructions and use appendix 1
- Babies for postmortem should only be kept in a cold cot for up to 24 hours to maximize the benefits of the examination. Baby then should be transported to morgue for refrigeration
- Some well-designed descriptive studies have shown that, under the right circumstances and guided by compassionate, sensitive, experienced staff, parents' experiences of seeing and holding their deceased baby is often very positive

8. RELATED POLICIES/ PROCEDURES/CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- Stillbirths and Fetal Deaths –Diagnosis, Delivery, Documentation and Transport
- Identification and security of neonate

9. RISK RATING

- Low

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10. NATIONAL STANDARD

- Standard 5 – Comprehensive Care

11. REFERENCES

- NSW Department of Health Guideline PD2007_025, Stillbirth – Management and Investigation.
- Koopmans L, Wilson T, Cacciatore J, Flenady V. Flenady V, Wilson T. Support for mothers, fathers and families after perinatal death. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2013 Jun 19;6:CD000452.
- Assessment of guidelines for good practice in psychosocial care of mothers after stillbirth: a cohort study: Hughes P et al. 2002 The Lancet,360: 114-18
- Perinatal Society of Australasia and New Zealand Clinical Practice guideline for Care Around Stillbirth and Neonatal Death. Version 3.4 January 2020
<https://www.stillbirthcre.org.au/assets/Uploads/Clinical-Practice-Guidelines-for-Care-Around-Stillbirth-and-Neonatal-Death2.pdf>

REVISION & APPROVAL HISTORY

Reviewed and endorsed Maternity Services LOPs group 9/3/21

Approved Quality & Patient Safety Committee 19/12/13

Reviewed and endorsed Obstetrics LOPs 3/12/13

Approved Patient Care Committee 8/5/08

Reviewed and endorsed Obstetrics Clinical Guidelines Group March 2008

Previously titled "*Protocol to be followed after Stillbirths, Neonatal Deaths and Fetal Deaths*"

Approved Quality Council 1/2/05

Endorsed Maternity Services Clinical Committee and Neonatal Clinical Committee 8/7/03

FOR REVIEW : APRIL 2026

Instructions for use and Placement of baby on Cuddle Cold Cot

1. To improve cooling efficiency, place the silver insulation under the cooling pad. Use double thickness and face the silver side upwards.



2. **Place the cooling pad and insulation in the basket on top of the mattress** (if present). Ensure the two hoses which lead from the pad are exposed and pushed through the basket. A thin sheet can be used to cover the cooling pad.

3. Plug into the electrical socket.

4. Plug the cooling pad connectors into the end of the hose (if not already in place). Again there should be a “click”.



5. Plug the hose containing the large plastic connector into the cooling unit. You should hear a “click”.



6. **Fill the cooling unit with distilled water until the water level is near the top of the viewing window.**



7. **Switch on** the cooling unit by pressing the **on/off button**.

The cooling pad will start to fill and the water level will drop. Ensure there are **no kinks** in the hose or pad else fluid will not circulate.

Continue to **fill the unit** with distilled water **until the tank remains over half full** (the cooling pad will now be full of water). Always keep the unit topped up to 1/3 to 2/3 during operation. An alarm will sound should the water level drop too low.

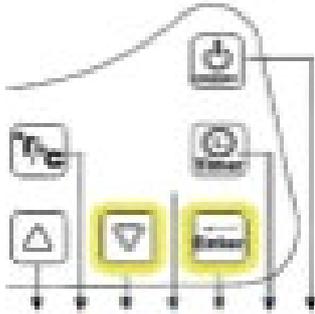
8. **Select temperature** display by pressing the °C/°F button on the unit. The display will show the temperature of the water in the cooling unit.

Set the required temperature to the lowest setting on the control unit (i.e. 8°C). To do this, press and hold the down_arrow key until 8 (or 46) is displayed, then press “Enter”. The unit will begin to cool the cooling pad.

When the pad starts to feel cool, cover pad with thin cot sheet.

**Place the baby on their back ensure good contact with cold pad.
Ensure baby in one layer of clothing/fabric only.**

Within approximately 45 mins the display on the unit will **reach** between **8°C-13°C** depending on ambient conditions. These are normal operating temperatures and the cooling pad will feel cold.



9. **Cover the baby with blankets as this will act as insulation.** For longer term use (e.g. through the night), the baby can be fully covered with blankets (including the head).
10. Always ensure at least 15cm space remains around the unit during cooling.

AFTER USE:

- **Switch off** (do not unplug till fan has stopped).
- **Disconnect** cold pad from hose by pressing release clips.
- **Clean pad** with neutral detergent.
- Disconnect hose from unit by pressing on plastic button underneath and gently pulling.
- **Drain water** from unit by inserting key under the water level tank, also drain the hose by inserting the key into the hose.

