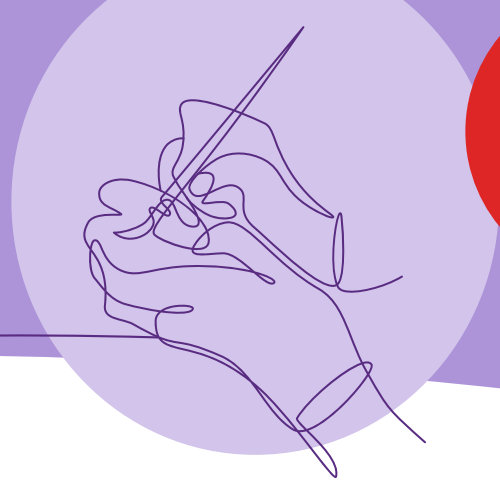


# Creating Memories

red  
nose



**You should be welcoming your beautiful new baby but instead you are experiencing the heartbreak of his or her death. We understand your devastation and the immense grief you are experiencing. We also understand how overwhelming the emotions may be around seeing and holding your baby. Many bereaved parents have shared how grateful they were for this time to parent and bond and make memories with their babies.**

Red Nose works with health professionals to promote the ways in which parents can capture memories with their babies in the short time they have in hospital.

It is also important to know that many parents capture memories but do not feel able to revisit them immediately or sometimes even for years to come. Capturing these memories means they are always there for you and your family in the future.

## **While you are with your baby**

### **Seeing and holding your baby**

If there is one word parents use to describe their baby it is 'beautiful'. The idea of seeing or holding your baby may feel daunting. If you are worried about what they will look like you can ask your midwife to describe them to you as a first step. professional.

**“I was so scared of death that there was lots I didn't do, take your time there is no rush. This is your baby. It is perfectly all right for you to unwrap him/her and look at every inch of your baby.”**

-Marsha

### **Bathing and dressing your baby**

Bathing and dressing your baby for the first time is something you may have especially imagined experiencing with your baby. A gentle bath followed by dressing in a special outfit is a memory many parents treasure.

**“I found bathing Hugo an incredibly healing process. Caring for him while I could really meant the world to me and has helped me hang on to vital memories of him.”**

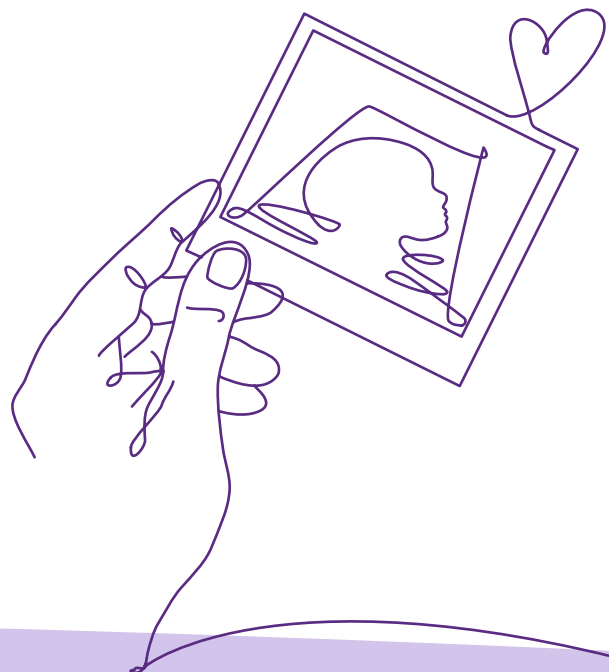
-Tash

### **Sharing your baby**

Consider who you would like to share this time with. Siblings, parents, grandparents, other family members and special friends can be invited to meet your baby. Whilst it can be hard to share when there is so little time, the people you share with will then have their own memories to share and talk about into the future. This can be a real gift.

**“We didn't involve our 7 and 9-year-old and I regret that now. I wish I had given them the chance to see and hold their baby brother if they wanted to.”**

- Karen



**“Even if you never look at them take lots of them. There are so many photos that I did not take that I wish I had.”**  
- Vana

### Photographs and video

Most parents say that photographs of their baby are their most treasured mementos.

You can take photos yourself, ask your midwives or contact **Heartfelt**, a volunteer group of professional photographers. You may like to take photos of your baby with family and friends, photos of your baby's hands and feet, your baby wearing a special outfit or with a special toy.

Capturing video footage will allow you to watch precious moments with your baby again. You may like to video special activities such as bathing your baby or reading or singing to your baby.

### Hand and footprints

There are inkless hand and footprint kits that can capture your baby's prints without staining their skin. Your hospital may be able to provide you with the special paper to make these prints or a friend or family member may be able to source a kit from a specialty shop.

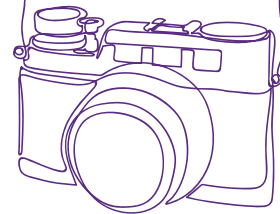
In some areas there are companies who can come to the hospital to make hand and foot casts.

### Taking your baby outside or home

You may be able take your baby outside or home if you wish. Please speak to your midwife or funeral director about this. Some parents find comfort in showing their baby important places for their family and to have a memory of their baby

outside the sterile hospital environment. to share when there is so little time, the people you share with will then have their own memories to share and talk about into the future. This can be a real gift.

**“I know it sounds weird but for some reason I just needed to introduce Emma to my mum. So, I took her to the gravesite and I just talked to her about all the things I could remember about my mother. I hope they are together now. Then we went home, and I sat in the rocking chair with her, just quietly rocking. It was quiet and peaceful in a way it just never was at the hospital.”**  
- Kate



### Blankets and other keepsakes

During your time with your baby there may be other mementos you can collect. Many parent's treasure their baby's cot card and hospital bands. You may like to cut a lock of your baby's hair. A baby's blanket can be a precious keepsake. You may wish to wrap your baby in the blanket provided for a short time and then take the blanket with you when you leave. Sometimes it is possible to have two matching blankets, one to stay with your baby and one to take home with you.

**“I brought along my favourite baby blanket that I had used for my first son and wrapped Alex in it and that is what she went to the funeral home in. It made me feel like she was being look after with something special from Mum.”**  
- Andrea

### Keepsakes containing ashes

Some parents choose to keep their baby's ashes in a precious box or a teddy bear. Funeral directors may have tiny urns designed especially for children, while some parents choose containers made from marble or blown glass.

**“My bear means everything to me, as I can give him snuggles and he can also come with us if we go away. It's my way of making the feeling of 'empty arms' easier to deal with.”**  
- Krystel

**“My baby was perfect, perfect in every way except she wasn’t breathing. I was both thrilled to see her and devastated she wouldn’t be coming home with us all at once. It was such a confusing time.”**

- Rachael

## When your baby can’t be with you

Sadly, we know it isn’t always possible to hold and make memories with your baby, especially if your baby died earlier in pregnancy. This section explores the ways you can remember and honour your baby over time, no matter how far along in your pregnancy you were or how long ago they died. There are also many ways to help you remember your baby has died.

### Memory boxes

Many parents find it helpful to discuss their own situation and feelings about another pregnancy with a hospital social worker, a grief counsellor or a counselling service. Bereaved parents also find that talking with other parents who have had a baby die is very helpful. Our volunteer parent supporters understand what you are feeling.

**“We made a shadow box for Charlotte’s first birthday. It holds all the small tokens we were given at her funeral. It was very healing for us to work together to make this. It also shows people how much the small things they gave mean to us.”**

- Lyndell

### Artistic endeavours and expression

Art and craft can give you the freedom to express your emotions non-verbally. Some people find creating their own art or craft a deeply meaningful process resulting in something to treasure. If you have other children, you may also like to get them to draw or build something in honour of their sibling. Writing reflections, diary entries, poems or stories, photography, music, dance and painting can also help you process your thoughts and feelings. Alternatively, you may like to work with an artist to help interpret your feelings as a means of expression. Body art (tattoos) is also a popular way that parents can memorialise their baby. Popular choices include names, dates and footprints.

### Portraits

Pencil, pastel or charcoal drawings and painted portraits can be recreated from photographs of your baby or a representation created based on photos of parents and siblings.

### Creating special places, spaces and rituals

Parents might create a special garden, memory corner with special items, or other special space. Soft and cuddly decorative cushions, quilts and toys, perhaps embroidered with your baby’s

name, can be very comforting. Other families find that there is great comfort in family rituals that include their baby. For example, hanging a Christmas decoration on the tree or burning a piece of rosemary with the first fire of winter in honour of the baby.

### Photo albums, scrapbooks or journals

You may like to style your own album or create one online. Many parents also enjoy the process of scrapbooking their baby’s lives through photos, documents and other meaningful items. Writing poems, stories or diary entries may also be a therapeutic way to help you understand and relate your thoughts.

**“I finally got the courage to sit down and write about Fletcher’s journey. It doesn’t take the pain away, but it lets me express my feelings that I am not strong enough yet to speak out loud. I think when my other children are older it will be something that they can read. Hopefully it will help them to understand why mummy cries and to know what a real little fighter Fletcher was.”**

- Kate



## Memorial trees, flowers or gardens

Plants can serve as a living symbol of your baby and your love for him or her. You may like to do an internet search to find the birth flower of your baby, or a rose that has a name which reminds you of him or her. Some parents create memorial gardens, so they have a place to go when they want to think about or feel connected with their baby. This could be decorated with angel figurines, a seat or even a plaque.

## Memorial Events

Sands hosts many memorial events over the year to help you celebrate and remember your baby. Say Their Name Day on March 25th and Walk to Remember events in October are opportunities for you and your family to get together and remember your much-loved family member.

## Jewellery

Customised jewellery can be a deeply treasured keepsake for bereaved parents. Many online companies specialise in personalised memorial jewellery for pregnancy loss or babies who have died. You may like to get a locket and keep a lock of your baby's hair inside, or have their name and birthdate engraved.

**“Every year when Hope's plant comes into bloom, I know that they are her flowers.”**

- Sally

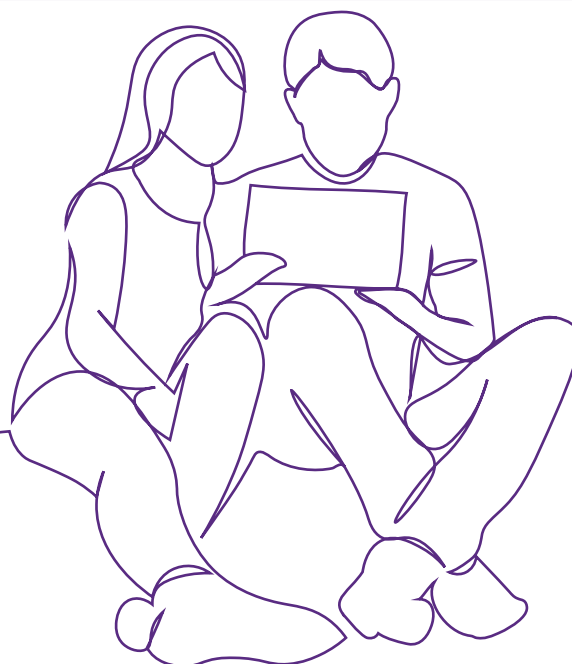
We want you to know you can take your time and choose what you are comfortable with and what you feel is right for you. It may help to talk to your midwife about how long you may have with your baby so that you can decide how you would like to spend that time. The death of a baby during pregnancy or in the newborn period has lifelong impacts for bereaved parents.

Finding ways to lovingly remember and honour your baby over time is helpful for many bereaved parents. Many parents voice fears that their baby will be forgotten. Memory making activities can help alleviate this fear and encourage conversation about your baby.

Go about this memory making process in your own time, and only do what feels right and meaningful to you. While the passing of time will help you to heal, these possessions will be forever treasured – just like the memory of your much-loved baby.

## Where to go for more help

Remember that you are not alone in this experience. Many parents find talking with other parents who have had a baby die, like a Red Nose volunteer parent supporter, to be very helpful.



**Red Nose Bereavement Support Services** We support anyone affected by the loss of a pregnancy, stillbirth or the death of a baby or child.

**24/7 Support Line** 1300 308 307

[support@rednose.org.au](mailto:support@rednose.org.au)

**Support Library** [rednosegriefandloss.org.au](http://rednosegriefandloss.org.au)