Losing one or more of your babies

The experience of losing one or more of your multiples is a different experience than for someone who loses a single baby. Not only do you grieve the loss of a baby, but also the loss of a unique type of parenthood. The combination of congratulations and condolences, birth and death announcements, baptisms and funeral arrangements can be an overwhelming, complex, and conflicting experience for you and your family.

Your living child is a reminder of those who did not live. You may wonder “why this baby and not the other?” Be aware that you may feel resentful that one baby lived and the other did not, especially if a specific sex gender was desired. Feelings of guilt can easily arise, as well. You may feel cheated in that you are receiving only a part of the pleasure of parenthood. And if one baby died in the womb, and the delivery is delayed, there are complex feelings of knowing that you are carrying a baby that is alive while grieving for the other. Your experience can produce a wide range of emotions.

You may have friends and family members who think it is easier to pretend the baby you lost did not exist. You may also hear "how fortunate you are to have a baby that did live." Friends and family members may be uncomfortable talking about your deceased baby or remembering the deceased baby on special days, such as birthdays. Acknowledging your baby’s life, no matter how short, is incredibly important, and your friends and family may need you to give them permission to do so. You may find it helpful to send a birth announcement, including language such as:

- Our twins (names) were born on (date). (Name), only with us for a short time,
- died on (date). We are happy to share that her sister/brother is growing stronger and will be coming home soon. (Name) will always be remembered by her (twin, parents, etc).1

We at UTMB are here to help you during this difficult time. A chaplain can visit with you during your hospital stay. Our case managers can help by giving you information that you will need concerning funeral arrangements. We can provide information about available counseling and support groups. Nurses and doctors can answer your questions and provide you with information.

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1 Adapted from Pat Schwiebert & Paul Kirk, When Hello Means Goodbye: A Guide for Parents Whose Child Dies Before Birth, At Birth or Shortly After Birth (Perinatal Loss, Portland, 2010).
At UTMB, we care about you, your family and friends. Please know that we are here to assist you with any needs or concerns you may have. You only need to ask.

References:


Online Sources include:

---BabyCentre---Coping With the Loss of a Twin (2008)
---Bereavement Support ---Do We Still Have Multiples
---Stillbirth and Newborn Death