**Making Memories with Your Baby**

The time you have with your baby may be limited, but it is no less precious. We would like to share some ideas from other families to help you make the most of your time together:

**Before you leave the hospital**

Slow down. Spend time with your baby. See your baby, hold your baby, bathe and dress your baby. Talk to your baby.

Are there any religious or cultural rituals (such as blessing or prayer) that are meaningful for you? (Baptism is usually done for the living, but consult with your own local minister for meaningful ceremonies for you and your baby.)

At UTMB, 2-3 pictures are provided for you and printed on a printer inside the hospital. You may bring your own camera. If you use public printing/photo processing, you may want to tell the processor how precious the pictures are to you. Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep is a group of volunteer photographers who come to take pictures of you and your baby. Check their website for further information.

If possible footprints and handprints are made for you. Other families suggest making an outline of your baby’s foot or hand.

**When you go home**

You may want to have a funeral, memorial service, or candle-lighting service. You may invite friends or just your family. There is no right or wrong way to celebrate your baby.

Some families decide not to have a formal service. Other ideas honoring your child include:

- Plant a tree
- Donate money, time, or toys to a charity in your child’s memory.
- Keep a journal or scrapbook about your baby. Write a letter to your baby.
- Find a matching locket or keychain for yourself and your baby’s father in remembrance.
Sharing your loss with others

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 note to family and friends to guide them through this difficult time. The short book, *When Hello Means Goodbye*, suggests the following wording to help your family and friends know what to do:

Dear Family and Friends,

Acknowledgement of our baby's short life may be upsetting to you. You may think the less said the better. Until now we did not know how important it would be for us to tell you of our baby, even though our baby died. You can help us through this difficult time by letting us talk about our sorrow when we feel the need, allowing us to cry when we want, and not pretending everything is okay when it's not. It will take time; but with your support we will make it. ¹

Take your time. Grieve for your baby in your way. Ask for help. Share your grief with others. Your baby will always be with you in your heart.