

Overview

Stillbirth

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A stillbirth is when a baby is born at or after 24 weeks of pregnancy, or weighing 500g or more, with no signs of life

It is one of the most devastating things that can happen. It can have a huge effect on you.

Your healthcare team is there to support you through this bereavement. Around 250 babies are stillborn every year in Ireland.

If a baby dies in the womb (before birth) during the first 23 weeks of pregnancy, it is known as a [miscarriage](#).

Call your maternity unit or hospital immediately if:

- you have any concerns about your baby's movements and tell them you are coming in now for a check-up

Causes of stillbirth

The best way to find the cause is to have a post-mortem examination completed. In most cases, following a post-mortem examination of the baby and placenta, a cause will be found.

Most stillbirths are linked to issues with the placenta, a congenital anomaly (a condition present from birth) in the baby or health complications in the mother, like high blood pressure or diabetes.

For a small number of cases, no cause is found. It is important to remember that stillbirth is very

unlikely to be caused by anything you have done or not done.

Read more about:

- [causes of stillbirth](#)
- [reducing the risk of stillbirth](#)

After a stillbirth

Your healthcare team is there to support and guide you after the stillbirth of your baby. They will help you make choices about spending time with your baby and help with making memories like taking footprints and photos.

The doctors and midwives will also explain the medical tests like the post-mortem examination and guide you on how to register your baby's birth.

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