FETAL – INFANT DEMISE

POLICY:
All patients experiencing perinatal loss will receive optimal emotional support, nursing care and grief counseling during their stay.

PURPOSE:
To guide hospital staff to provide care of patients experiencing fetal/infant loss.

SPECIAL INFORMATION:
1. Patient and Family Services (PFS) is to be contacted on admission to hospital for probable/pending fetal loss.
2. The nurse will work closely with PFS to facilitate post delivery care of family and fetus.
3. If live birth occurs, the baby must be admitted and have a chart to document patient condition, care and disposition.
4. Any parent wanting to take the fetus or stillborn baby for burial, will need to obtain a body transport permit from the Marshall County Courthouse prior to taking the baby.
5. A “Disclosure Tracking Form” will be completed, when applicable, as the fetal death certificate will be sent to the funeral home.

EQUIPMENT:
2. Fetal Demise Checklist
3. Patient & Family Services Fetal Demise Checklist
4. Fetal Demise/Stillbirth Guide

PROCEDURE:
1. Notify PFS of fetal loss upon mother’s presentation.
2. Use Resolve Through Sharing Checklist for guidance regarding parental/family options before and after baby is delivered.
3. Fill out jot sheet and leave a copy to record the birth in the journal.
4. Fetal Death Certificate must be filled out if greater than 20 weeks.
5. If live birth occurs a Birth Certificate and a Death Certificate must be filled out.
6. Post Mortem Care/Organ Donation Notification must be completed by supervisor or director if fetus is 20 weeks or greater.
7. If autopsy requested:
   a. Fill out autopsy request.
   b. Place ID band on fetus.
   c. For fetus 20 weeks or greater, wrap in receiving blanket and take to morgue and place in cooler. Sign body into morgue.
d. For fetus less than 20 weeks place the body in a Lab specimen container filled with Formalin – identify container with addressograph sticker – take to morgue and place in the cooler. Complete pathology requisition.
e. Notify Lab of body in morgue and autopsy request.

NURSE PREPARATIONS:

1. Notify PFS of admission.
2. Footprints/handprints if possible
3. Weigh and measure
4. Pictures
5. Identabands (One on body and one for parents.)

DISPOSITION OF FETUS:

1. Funeral Home: PFS will help contact the funeral home of the family’s choice and assist with funeral arrangements as families desire.
   a. After family is done holding baby and the nurses preparations are done, the baby is taken to the morgue, wrapped in a receiving blanket. Place the baby on a cart in the morgue and sign the body in the morgue log book.
   b. Notify Lab that the body has been taken to the morgue.
2. Hospital Disposal – this is only an option for under 20 weeks gestation.
   a. Parents must sign a hospital disposal permit. The original is placed on mom’s chart and the copy goes to the Lab with the body.
   b. Place body in Lab container filled with Formalin, labeled with patient’s name. Complete pathology requisition.
   c. Take body to morgue and place in cooler. It isn’t necessary to sign the body in the morgue.
   d. Body must have ID band and specimen container must be labeled.
   e. Notify Lab that fetus is in morgue for disposal.

FETAL DEATH CERTIFICATE:

1. Physician will complete the medical portion of the fetal death certificate worksheet.
2. Patient & Family Services or nursing staff will assist parents to complete the fetal death certificate worksheet.
   a. The baby may be named or referred to as “Baby Boy….” or “Baby Girl….”
3. The WCC Unit Secretary will type the information from the fetal death certificate worksheet on to the final Fetal Death Certificate, and have the delivering physician sign it. The worksheet will be placed on the mothers chart.
4. The final signed Fetal Death Certificate will be sent to the funeral home.
5. The Disclosure Tracking form will be completed and placed on the Mother’s chart.
### Patient & Family Services Fetal Demise Checklist

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>PARENTS DECLINE</th>
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<td>1. Discuss options with parents before/after baby is delivered. (Pictures, holding the baby, funeral.)</td>
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<td>2. Offer/notify clergy.</td>
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<td>3. Assist nursing with footprints/handprints, lock of hair.</td>
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<td>4. Offer footprints/handprints, lock of hair to parents.</td>
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<td>5. Take both 35mm and Polaroid pictures of baby and offer to parents.</td>
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<td>6. Discuss fetal disposition (funeral or hospital disposal). Hospital disposal permit.</td>
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<td>7. Address grief/emotions related to demise.</td>
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<td>8. Share parent packet with grief information, memory book, mementos, etc.</td>
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<td>9. Identify support systems.</td>
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<td>10. Assist in notification of family.</td>
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<td>11. Provide parents with funeral home phone numbers.</td>
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<td>12. Follow up as indicated</td>
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**Examples of mementos:**
- Crib card, tape measure, pictures, footprints/handprints, lock of hair, baby blanket, clothing, rattle, stuffed animal or toy.

**Reminder:**
1. Always wear gloves when handling the baby during prints or photos.
2. Social worker cannot talk directly to funeral home due to State laws/regulations.
3. Social workers will maintain a supply of film for camera.

Hospital disposal means - the fetus is processed at a medical waste facility in another county and later buried.

Hospital disposal must be less than 20 weeks gestation and hospital disposal permit signed.

Assist with completing Death Certificate/Birth Certificate.
STILL BIRTH CHECK LIST

Below 20 Weeks

ID Band on body & 1 for baby book
Footprints
Pictures
Momentos-Blanket, Crib Card
Blessing/Prayer/Baptism

Body Disposition:
  a. Hospital Disposal
     (Must have a Disposal of Fetus consent signed by parents.) Body to be placed in specimen container and covered with Formalin. Then fetus can be taken to morgue. A copy of the Disposal permit needs to accompany the body. (Original on mom’s chart.) Fetus must have ID band on and container must be marked.
  b. Funeral Services
     Contact PFS for help with this. Body will be taken to morgue wrapped in blanket with ID band on.
     Funeral Home can pick up body there.
  c. No fetal Death Certificate is needed.
  d. Notify Lab of fetus in morgue.
  e. Hospital disposal only option for less than 20 weeks.

20 Weeks or Greater

ID band on body & 1 for baby book
Footprints
Pictures
Momentos-Blanket, Crib Cart
Blessing/Prayer/Baptism

a. Fetal Death Certificate
b. Disclosure Tracking Form to be completed
c. Post mortem care/organ donation filled out by supervisor

For Autopsy
Fill out Autopsy Permit slip.
Put ID band on fetus. Wrap fetus in receiving blanket and take to morgue.
Sign body into morgue log book.
Notify Lab personnel of need for autopsy.

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