Twin loss –
The death of one or
both twin babies
The death of a baby is a devastating and upsetting event. This leaflet aims to help with twin baby loss if one or both babies die.

It is aimed at parents and their friends and family, with what to do, expect and what not to say. No loss should ever be compared; however, we must acknowledge the crippling effect such a loss brings.
If one baby dies:

For parents

Allow yourself sadness- it is hard to continue with the joys of new parenting when someone is missing. Do not feel bad for not being able to ‘shake off’ your grief. Although you have one baby here, you also have lost a child. This is a harsh reality and you need to be gentle with yourself and not put too much pressure on yourself to be ‘ok’.

- Do not be alarmed if you do not feel a bond with your other child instantly. Grief is connected to our attachment of a person and you may feel if you do not get attached to your surviving twin you are protecting yourself. Give yourself time and allow the bond to form naturally. Trying to force a connection will not help you or your baby.

- You may feel overly protective of your living twin. The slightest cough, cold or temperature could see you at your doctor’s surgery or Accident and Emergency department constantly. This is perfectly understandable. Tell the professionals caring for you the situation and be honest with how you feel.

- Go with your instinct when deciding how much information to reveal to your surviving twin, when they are old enough to understand. It is your choice if you tell your child they had a sibling. We recommend being honest and open. Many surviving twins report ‘knowing’ that something was missing from their lives if their sibling died. We believe by including the twin who has died from a young age, it can help eradicate this ‘wondering’ and be an open and honest part of their life.

- Prepare yourself for milestones. It is likely that you will be happy when your child takes their first steps, says their first word or goes to nursery. However, it will also be a glaring reminder that your other child is missing. Allow yourself to be the two halves of a parent on these occasions. The one half when you can smile and laugh and be happy. And the other when you may need to take some time to be alone and process your loss.
For friends and family

• Be aware that having one twin survive is not going to instantly ‘fix’ what has happened. A child has still died, and the loss will be felt immensely. Maybe even more so, in fact, as the surviving twin is a constant reminder of certain milestones and the ‘what could have been’. Allow them the ability to be a parent to both children. The joy of parenting their child who is here and the respect that they need to acknowledge and remember the child who has died.

• They will always yearn for two of materialistic items, not the singular one that they have. There should have been two prams, two car seats and two cribs. Be prepared if they struggle when seeing items such as other people’s double buggy’s. One twin surviving does not make up for the loss of the other and the fact that they wanted their two babies.

• They may struggle seeing other healthy twins. They will mourn for their loss but also feel sadness for their surviving twin. They will grieve for the bond that could have been between siblings. Seeing other twins together is a stark reminder.

• Be careful what you expose them to. i.e. social media etc. Even a single photograph of other twins can bring much heartache of what is missing, so be careful and thoughtful of their needs.

• When buying presents for the baby be mindful of the fact there were two babies. Although it would not be appropriate to buy the same gift, a keepsake such as a candle will show that the baby who died is not forgotten.

• Be sensitive that every occasion is bittersweet. The first Christmas, the first word, the first day at school and the first everything will be a happy and sad combination of emotions. They will be pleased for the child who is here and sad for the one who is not.

What NOT to say

“At least you still have one baby.” This is extremely unhelpful. They wanted both babies.

“Two babies are hard work. You have it so much easier.” - They want the hard work. They would give anything to be rushed off their feet with two babies.

“Two babies are so much more expensive. Two lots of Christmas presents, two university fees. Think yourself lucky.” – They wish they had this worry. They wanted to provide these things for two children.
**If both babies die**

**For parents**

- Acknowledge your two babies as separate people. Remember their different features and if you got to spend time with them, the different characters. You had two babies and it is important to grieve for them as individuals.
- Be prepared to struggle seeing other twins. It is difficult not to imagine the ‘what could have been’.
- Remember you are still parents to your babies. Although they are not here with you, you are still parents and that can never be taken from you.
- Allow yourself time to grieve before you decide to try and conceive again. If you do feel ready ensure you are open and honest with your partner about your thoughts and concerns. Discuss the possibility of a multiple birth again and how you feel about that.

**For friends and family**

- The loss of twins is the same as two people dying in one family. The losses should not be grouped as one and both babies should be acknowledged as individuals. Use their names rather than referring to them as one.
- Be careful what you expose the twin’s parents to. i.e. social media etc. Even a single photograph of other twins can bring much heartache of what is missing, so be careful and thoughtful of their needs.
- Remember special dates such as anniversaries or birthdays. Although you will not celebrate as you would if the twins were alive, it is so important to acknowledge and remember them on special occasions.
A small keepsake such as two candles or tree baubles at Christmas can mean so much to grieving parents.

**What NOT to say**

“At least they are together”. – this may be said to bring comfort but it is not helpful. Although well meant the parents wish they were here with them, all together.

“At least you are not left with just one. That would be awful”. – This life, without both babies, is awful. Because both have died together does not make the pain any easier.

“Maybe you will get pregnant with twins again”. The parents have probably considered this but it is for them to broach this subject not anyone else.

“Will you try again?”. Allow parents the space to tell you if they intend on trying to conceive again. They need to be able to control when they talk about such matters so let them come to you.

If you would like to discuss anything contained in this booklet please do not hesitate to contact us.
Gentle touches

Gentle touches is the collective name we use when helping out the professionals who look after families affected by the death of a child. We provide items to funeral directors, cemeteries, hospitals and any other professionals in need. From specifically designed baby catafalques, cribs, graveside dressing and various other items to make the time after a death that little gentler.

Literature

We provide helpful and informative literature to those affected by the loss of a baby. From practical advice on how to make memories to ‘letters from one angel parent to another’ offering advice. All are free of charge and available to families and professionals.

If you feel you may benefit from any of the services we provide or think you may be able to help us continue to help maintain our services please get in touch via email to info@ltandco.org

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This booklet has been prepared and sponsored by Little Things & Co. – The baby bereavement charity.

Little Things & Co. is a registered charity (1165463) who provide emotional and practical support to anyone suffering the loss of a baby.

Little Things & Co. believes the bereavement care after losing a child should be seamless, thoughtful and helpful.

If you would like to discuss anything you have read within this booklet please do not hesitate to get in touch.

To find out more about the work they do visit www.ltandco.org or email info@ltandco.org