



Stichting Hanne

Information

A life without your child, like there will never be another tomorrow, you had so many dreams for the future even before your child was born, how do you have to go on? Your life will never be the same. Even though everyone has his own way of coping with the loss of a loved one and we can't say which way is best, we want to help you. Helping by showing the possibilities, now that you have so much to deal with. We want to help you create as many tangible memories with your baby as possible. For this we offer you a memory box. Further on in this leaflet you will find more information about this. You can notify your healthcare provider if and when you would like to receive the box.

Hanne's Foundation

In October 2017 we founded Hanne's Foundation, in loving memory of our daughter Hanne, for parents who lose their baby during pregnancy, during birth or shortly after.

Why Hanne's Foundation?

On May 10th 2017 our beautiful daughter Hanne was born after a pregnancy of over 41 weeks. We and our entire family had been looking forward to this precious moment. Simultaneously it was the most special and sad moment of our lives, because our beautiful daughter was stillborn. I felt the need to put my feelings about this on paper and read about the experiences of others in the same situation. All the information I found was very valuable to me. The memories of the short time Hanne was with us are very dear to us. I hope to help other parents with this foundation, in name of our girl, to make the most of this time with their baby. By doing so, I hope Hanne's short life in my womb will become valuable to others.

- If you want to read my personal story you can visit:
www.mijnmeisjehanne.wordpress.com (Dutch) -

For whom?

Every parent who loses his or her baby has to cope with an inhumane type of loss. Whether this is during pregnancy, during birth or shortly after. All your dreams for the future crumble down. All certainties vanish. All of a sudden you have to think about things your head is not capable of. At a moment like that it can be very supportive to have help, so that you don't have to look for information alone, and you don't feel like you're on your own. For those parents Hanne's foundation wants to offer help and information.

Our purpose

With Hanne's Foundation we want to offer help to parents who lose their baby. We do this by:

- ★ Offering a website filled with useful information.
- ★ This information leaflet, which parents can get in hospitals we team up with.
- ★ Tips and information found on the website and in this leaflet, about things which you have to think about undesirably.
- ★ Tips and information that can help to make well considered decisions. Because of this parents have to spend less time searching for information and will lose less valuable time with their child.
- ★ A memory box parents get offered for free in hospitals we team up with. In this box parents will find tools to create as many tangible memories as possible.

Contact:

Email: marlieke@stichtinghanne.nl

Website: www.stichtinghanne.nl

On our website you will find the information from this leaflet, as well as our board and sponsors. Besides, you will also find information for the parents' friends and family, links to various websites for e.g. memory gifts, photography etc., a butterfly garden where you can create a special place for your child and also the latest news about our foundation.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stichtinghanne

We keep everyone who supports our foundation informed on the latest news of Hanne's foundation.

Instagram: www.instagram.com/stichtinghanne

On our Instagram we share photos of all the pretty stuff we received. Thanks to these many donations we will be able to give this stuff to parents who need our help.

Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/stichtinghanne

On our Pinterest page you can find among other things inspirational quotes, a board to help you with taking photos of your baby and a number of boards with inspiration for possible memory gifts.

The memorybox

Our memorybox contains:

★ A diary:

In which you can write down your thoughts. In which you can write memories and reread them and by which perhaps you can create some order in the chaos.

★ A blanket:

To wrap or cover your baby with. You can either leave the blanket with your child at your final goodbyes or take it home as a tangible memory.

★ 2 stuffed animals:

You can leave one with your baby and take one home with you.

★ 2 armbandjes:

One is for an adult and one for a child. The smallest bracelet is to reduce down to 2 centimetres by pulling the strings. You can also save the bracelet for a brother or sister when your baby is too small or fragile. Or you can lay it in the crib with him or her and possibly take it home with you later. When in doubt whether or not you can put the bracelet on your baby, you can consult the caregiver.

★ Tea light holder:

To burn a candle for your baby. In the future it can be helpful to do this more often. In memory of your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider when there are products in the memory box you don't wish to receive or you don't want to use. They will give those products back to us.

Help with the loss of a child

When you are reading this, your baby has passed away or will soon. First of all we would like to wish you a lot of strength on this terrible loss. We will refer to the reader of this information booklet as 'you', because we don't know what the family composition is. Every piece of information here is meant to help you take well considered choices. You don't have to do anything, but we want to help you so you can take the best possible choices for you personally, about what does and doesn't appeal to you. When you want or don't want certain things, but you don't have the strength to ask or say so, ask a family member or a good friend if they want to do this for you.

Everybody copes differently with the loss of a child. There is not one right way, just do what feels good for you. Don't, let others tell you what you should do and when. Take all the time you need and know that it is not strange at all to feel sadness forever.

Try to keep talking with people in your environment to let them know how you feel. For an outsider it can be very difficult to know what you feel, you wouldn't know until you lose a child yourself. People can however keep your feelings in consideration when you make them a part of it. Tell them what you like and what you appreciate, but also tell them what hurts you and what lets you down. Keep talking to one another! With every subject in this information booklet I will name a few points you can think about during your time with your baby. It can help you along, but remember you don't have to do anything. I will then further explain some subjects, so that you have as many information possible to make well considered choices.

After the bad news

When you received the bad news your baby has passed away or will soon, your whole world stands still.. The bad news always hits you hard because until the certainty your baby has passed away or will soon, you can't possibly imagine this. Especially your feeling can't imagine this. And all of a sudden you have to live with this fact. You want to go on as if it didn't happen, but you don't have that option, for this is the time to still have your baby close to you. So many things come to you at a time when you can feel so powerless. Below a few things for you to think about.

Things to think about:

- ★ Would you like to inform certain people? - Would you like to do this yourself or is there anyone you can ask to do this for you? You can ask someone to keep people up to date when this is not something you want to do yourself.
- ★ Would you like to talk to a professional about what is happening? You can let the hospital or your doctor know, they can refer you to a psychologist or social worker, they can also come to the hospital to visit you. You can talk to them about your feelings but also talk about practical things.
- ★ Would you like to have contact with a clergyman, also tell your hospital. They can contact one for you.

"We had a lot of emotional and practical support of our family after the bad news. Without them we couldn't have done it this way. We didn't feel the need for professional help at the time, I would have accepted it if it was necessary, but the disbelief, sadness and emptiness we felt at that moment were totally normal feelings."

Before the birth

You probably were looking forward to the moment when your little baby is laying in your arms. Right now, you maybe don't know how to feel. Perhaps you are looking up to this moment, but know that it still will be very special when your child is in your arms. It's important to make images and memories for later on.

Things to think about before your baby is born:

- ★ When you have special wishes about the delivery you can still indicate those.
- ★ Have you got any questions about how everything will work out, the delivery or the time afterwards. Also, when in doubt about the judgment of the doctor, always indicate this!
- ★ When your baby will be born early or if it does have any external deviation, it can be helpful to ask in advance what the size or looks of your baby will be. When you dread to meet your child for the first time, you can talk things over with your caregiver and arrange when and how the first meeting will be. Parents who were quite scared at first feel much more positive the longer they see their baby.
- ★ You can indicate if you want to cut the umbilical cord yourself or want someone else to do it. You can also indicate if you want to hold your baby right away after birth.
- ★ Which things would you like to take with you to the hospital. Do you want to dress up your child, or do you want anything to lay with him or her? Clothing, a stuffed animal, jewellery. Or maybe you want to smear something onto your baby. Forgot something? Don't hesitate to ask someone to get it for you. Is your baby too small to buy clothes for, but do you wish to put something on, ask for the possibilities at the hospital. This is also the place to go to when in doubt if something is possible or not.
- ★ Did you choose a name for your baby? When you didn't do this yet it can be nice to think about before your baby is born.
- ★ Have you got a picture of your pregnant belly or would you like to have one taken?
- ★ Would you like to play certain music during birth, when your baby is about to pass away, when your baby is with you, or when you have to say goodbye?

★ When you wish to take photos of your baby after birth, you could do this yourself or enable a foundation to do so. There are foundations which do this for free. Information about this can be found on our website. The hospital can help you get in touch with a foundation.

★ Sometimes it is possible to make a foot- and/or handprint of your baby in plaster or ink. When you would like this you can inform if this is possible with your baby and if there are options for this at the hospital. When this is not possible at the hospital, someone else might want to provide you with the necessary stuff for this. - The prints could be used in memory gifts as well. Information about - this can be found on the website.

"After finding out Hanne's heart stopped beating, we were sent home to inform our loved ones and to return the next day to induce the delivery. The day of the delivery I repacked Hanne's bag at home. I packed a nice little blanket for our girl, a stuffed animal from the playpen and two outfits. On Monday night labour started and on Wednesday at 12:36 our girl was there. I experienced the time before her birth as pleasant. Time to get used to the fact our little girl would be stillborn. Time to think about a number of things. Time to write down my feelings in my diary. When it was time, I was ready. I really wanted to hold our baby girl after birth and this is exactly what happened almost immediately."

After the birth

Meeting one another and parting so shortly after each other seems impossible to do. The time with your baby is short, too short, and will never be long enough. Don't hesitate to make contact with your baby and make memories, this will be valuable to look back on in the future. To have as much tangible memories as possible can be a nice thing in the long haul, so keep stuff and take a lot of photos.

There's a lot to deal with at the moment, and at the same time you have to make decisions. Definite decisions, because you can't reconsider them. Take all the time you need. Follow your own feelings, talk to people around you, but make very clear what you think is important. When you don't feel comfortable with something tell someone, and indicate what you would like. You will hear whether things are possible or not. Ask for help if you need something, and it needs to be picked up at home. Usually people want to help and will lovingly drop something off at the hospital or somewhere else. You should take all the time you can with your baby.

To think about:

During the time you are with your baby think about if you want the following (and when):

- ★ Family and friends visiting.
- ★ Family and friends holding your baby.
- ★ Writing a letter or card to your baby.
- ★ Family or friends writing a letter or card to your baby or making a drawing for the baby.
- ★ Hold your baby, hug, hold hands, kiss your baby and look at every inch of him or her.
- ★ Tell or sing something for your baby.
- ★ When you can go home you get the option between taking your baby home or leave her/him at the mortuary of the hospital to be laid out. When you take your baby home the funeral director can provide a cooled crib.
- ★ Would you like to be alone when you get home or would you like for family and friends to be there?

★ When a doctor thinks autopsy is useful (s)he will ask you whether you agree with this. When it's hard for you to make a decision about this, talk to your treating doctor or a social worker. They can also explain a lot about the procedure and maybe take away some of your fears.

Depending on the duration of the pregnancy the following things are possible sometimes:

- ★ Making hand- and/or footprints in plaster or with ink.
- ★ Cut off a lock of hair.
- ★ Washing, smearing, massage, dressing, putting jewellery on your baby. You can also choose to just be present if you rather want the caregiver to wash your baby.

When in doubt, you can always ask your caregiver.

“The time with our girl was so special, there she was, our baby to whom we had been looking forward to for 9 months, she was beautiful, it really was as special as people say about first meeting their baby. Family came over and admired her and the similarities with us. We also took enough time to be alone with our ... girl and make beautiful memories.”

Taking photos of your baby

You can capture all your loving memories in photos. Don't be afraid to take photos, you can look at them when you feel you are ready. You never take too many photos; you can always delete or edit them whenever you want. My experience is that I was happy with all those photos, your baby is with you for such a short period of time and every photo is a tangible, valuable memory. That is why I would advise to capture as many memories as possible. On our Pinterest-page you will find an inspiration page filled with photo ideas. When you find it difficult to take photos or look at them, it is often possible for the caregiver to take the photos and keep them for you. That way you can collect the photos later, once you are ready.

To think about:

What photos can you take? Below you'll find a list of which you could possibly take pictures. You could also make videos.

- ★ When you hold your baby.
- ★ Of your family. Completely or for example just your hands.
- ★ When family holds your baby.
- ★ Your baby without clothes.
- ★ Your baby with clothes.
- ★ Your baby wrapped in a blanket.
- ★ Your baby in the crib.
- ★ Feet, hands, the face of the baby, pretty much everything. Also small details can be a valuable memory.
- ★ When you hug, wash, dry, smear, dress or kiss your baby.
- ★ When your baby holds something, for example your wedding rings or a special stuffed animal.
- ★ Your hands together, for example while wearing the same piece of jewellery.
- ★ When your baby's foot or hand is laying in your hand.

“During our time with Hanne we mostly took photos of her, the prettiest one is the one of our three hands together, immortalized forever. Also the ones where Hanne and I are wearing the same bracelet are very dear to me, in particular because those bracelets now lay in her room at home.”

Saying goodbye

This is the moment you don't want to think about at all after your baby's birth. You can't imagine anything harder than this. You have to say goodbye to the baby you just met. Talk about who wants to say goodbye and when in advance, so when the moment of parting has come you don't have to think about this anymore.

To think about:

- ★ Who you would like to be present?
- ★ Would you like to say goodbye at home or at the hospital or would you like a farewell service?
- ★ Would you like to have speeches?
- ★ Would you like to play certain music? On our website you can find various farewell songs.
- ★ Would you like photos of this moment?
- ★ Would you choose to bury, cremate or leave your baby at the hospital?
- ★ What would you like to give to your baby and what would you like to keep in her/his memory? It can be nice to keep something that your baby held. Clothing, a bracelet, a stuffed animal, a blanket or something else. When it's stuff from the hospital you can always ask if you can take it with you.
- ★ Where do you want to bury or cremate your baby in? You can choose a casket but also a woven basket or a cloth can be a possibility. You can purchase these somewhere, but you can also make it yourself. On our Pinterest-page you will find examples. On our website you will find links to funeral products.

The moment of saying goodbye

Listen to your own needs and wishes when it comes to this. Would you like a lot of family and friends or would you like this moment to be intimate, choose what makes you comfortable and don't feel obligated to do something your surroundings want you to do. A funeral director can give you a lot of information about different possibilities. In case you would like a professional photographer to take photos, contact a funeral photographer.

For more information go to www.afscheidsmomenten.nl or ask your funeral director.

Legislation

The legislation about the farewell of your baby during pregnancy differs per pregnancy duration. The hospital can tell you about the current rights, duties and differences.

Burial or cremation

The choice between a burial or cremation is very personal and everyone has different feelings about it. I will talk about the differences below so you can make a well-considered choice. When you didn't take a funeral insurance the costs of a funeral can scare you. Know that there are possibilities. The costs don't have to be a reason to omit on certain things. Funeral directors often have a complete package, but this often brings higher costs. Talk about the things you think are important and what things you want to omit. When you don't want a service at the funeral home, it doesn't mean you can't have it somewhere else, for example at home or in the backyard of grandpa and grandma. You can ask the funeral director to come for the casket afterwards. Of course it is possible to do this in your own way. You can also choose to not have a funeral director but to contact the cemetery or crematorium yourself. When you don't have the strength to inform about all of this, ask a family member or close friend to do this for you. Costs for cremation or the waiting time for the urn can be different in The Netherlands or Belgium. When the pregnancy was shorter than 24 weeks, the hospital sometimes offers the option to cremate your baby together with other babies free of charge.

To think about:

★ In case of a burial you and your family will have a place to go to, this special place will need to be taken care of. Do you think it's a nice idea to visit the grave on a regular basis?

★ In case of a cremation you can choose about the destination of the ashes. You can keep the urn at home or scatter the ashes. An urn wall or garden are also an option for the urn as is the option of burying the urn in an urn grave or family grave. With the wall, garden or burial of the urn come extra costs.

★ When choosing burial or an urn wall or garden, you will have to pay grave rights. You will probably want to have the option of visiting your baby for a long time so you will have these costs for a long time.

★ When choosing cremation you can put a bit of ashes in a piece of jewellery or tattoo. You can also divide the ashes in more than one urn. This way you have the possibility to put a mini-urn in the living room or one in the home of a family member. Information about urns and gravestones can be found on our website.

★ With a pregnancy duration shorter than 24 weeks you also have the option to bury your baby in the backyard or in the forest for example. Keep in mind you might move in the future.

“Our farewell of Hanne was in the hospital, where I had to stay in that moment. You don't want it, but you have to. Personally we had a good feeling about our goodbye with Hanne. We took our goodbyes with our girl; the most difficult thing I ever had to do, but it was pretty, a pretty goodbye, with the people we wanted to be present. It was exactly the way we wanted it to be. After the farewell a nurse took Hanne to the mortuary, where she was picked up the day after by a funeral director and was taken to Belgium to be cremated. The funeral director brought the urn back, we later collected this.”

After the farewell

After the farewell the world will start to spin again. When all the practical issues have been taken care of, the reality will set in. It can be a wise thing to officially let your surroundings know your baby has passed away. By doing so, you can prevent a lot of painful confrontations and questions. It makes sure that people are up to date with your loss and it gives them the possibility to pay their respects.

You can announce the passing away by, for example, sending a birth card or placing an ad in the newspaper, but you can also for example announce it through Facebook. Often such announcements get reactions from people you don't know, who went through the same and want to show their compassion and offer an listening ear.

It is possible to use a personal text, a poem or song lyrics for the announcement. For inspiration, look on our website. When you find it hard, you can always ask the social worker of the hospital or the printing office or funeral director for help. Sometimes there are cards of fellow sufferers at the hospital, which can be a helpful example for you.

It is also possible you don't want to announce the passing away to everyone because there weren't a lot of people who knew you were pregnant to begin with. Do consider that people who don't know about the passing away can't show their compassion either.

“We posted a message on Facebook to announce the birth and passing away of our daughter. I put a footprint of our daughter in that message, a piece of text that should have been in her birth card and a poem from the booklet the hospital gave us..”

Often the days with your baby will pass in a blur. When you are alone and without your baby for the first time it will set in that nothing has actually changed, but at the same time life will never be the same again. An empty crib, an empty playpen, baby stuff and no baby cry. Everything will remind you of something awful that has happened. It can be helpful to read about other people's experiences. To read how they managed to cope. To find recognition and to see that everybody copes in their own way. Look on our website for books or personal stories. You can also write down your own feelings, it can be helpful to re-read them and create some order in all the chaos and make sense of your feelings.

“I kept a journal during the pregnancy, and after the passing away of Hanne I continued writing. It was a nice feeling to put my feelings on paper and to re-read them. Later I created the website ‘Mijn meisje Hanne’ with help of my journal.”

There isn't one right way. Do whatever makes you feel good at the time that feels right for you. You will possibly have to cope with a variety of feelings. It is normal to be enormously sad, mad, desperate, confused or emotionless, but don't hesitate to accept help when you don't know what to do. This help could be offered by your surroundings, but also by a professional. Your baby will always be your baby. Nothing can replace your baby and (s)he will be missed forever. Bear in mind that not everybody in your surroundings will understand this. When you continue with your life people will think the sadness is gone or you don't want to talk about it anymore. Again indicate what feels pleasant or painful for you. That way your surroundings can pay attention to your feelings.

You still have the right at maternity care even when your baby passed away. You still delivered. When maternity care wasn't applied for the social worker of the hospital can do it for you. Often the maternity care bureau will send an experienced maternity carer. The maternity carer can offer practical household help or personal care, but she can also offer a listening ear. She can let visitors in and also indicate when you need your rest. She can also handle the care of other children in the household.

“When we were asked whether we wanted to have maternity care my initial thought was ‘why should I want that?’. Eventually, I am really glad we chose to do it. Someone to talk to, someone to help you going, someone who is there for you. You delivered a baby after all and lost it at the same time You had to say goodbye to your most precious possession. It’s not a bad idea to accept help.”

Because everyone deals with loss in a different way, you and your possible partner and surroundings can also differ. Try to be understanding for the way they deal with it. Talk about it with each other and give space to deal with the loss in your own way. To keep the information in this booklet as clear as possible, I chose to discuss the most important issues. When you feel the need to get more information about the subjects, it can be interesting to read the book ‘Stille baby’s’ (‘Silent babies’). You will find a link to the PDF-file on the website. Also you can find more informatio

Other children in the family

Most of the time possible other children in the family were looking forward to their baby brother or -sister. Children notice their parents feeling sad, it is important to be honest about the death of the baby and to involve them in saying goodbye. Also when the child is or was severely ill it is important to honestly explain this to a brother or sister. Let them know the baby didn't just had the flu, but, for example, would never have been able to move, eat, drink and sleep as they do. Let the children see their baby brother or sister and maybe even let them hold the baby, this makes it easier

to understand what has happened. When children ask questions it is important to be as honest as possible, also to questions you don't know the answer to, just tell them you don't know. Don't cause any confusion by, for example, telling them the baby is asleep. The indistinctness can make children anxious to go to bed. It is also advisable to bring the other children from the family with you when saying goodbye. This way they will be conscious about this event and experience it as a reality.

Other children in the household can be a distraction, but it can also be difficult to give them the attention you want to give. Try to explain to the child you can feel sad sometimes or feel irritated more quickly and that this has nothing to do with them, but everything with the sadness concerning the loss of the baby. Every child deals with the loss of a baby brother or -sister differently. There is also a difference in mourning depending the age. Very young children generally have difficulty with the changes within the family. The turmoil and sadness of the parents make them more upset than the death of the brother or sister they never really got to know. Children learn how to deal with loss by observing their parents. Don't be afraid to show your emotions, this way the child knows it's okay to have those feelings. When children feel guilty about the death of their brother or sister it is important to talk about this and not ignore the situation.

Grant children the possibility to look at the baby or visit the gravesite after the funeral. It's important to never make a child do anything, they will let you know what they need.

It is also important to involve the children born after the deceased brother or sister with the remembrance. This way they understand why mommy or daddy can be sad sometimes. Links to websites who offer help to brothers and sisters of a deceased baby can be found on our website.

Dear parent,

With this booklet and the website I have tried to guide you a little. I am no professional, and the information is based on my own experience. Also the books 'Stille baby's' ('Silent babies') and the 'handvaten' in the book 'Lieve Boris' from Anja Dalhuisen helped me in writing this booklet. Even though every story is unique, I hope my words will be able to comfort you.

Marlieke de Steur

Mommy of Hanne and president of Hannes Foundation.

Without you

So silent, so empty, without you
So alone, without you
So mean, so without you
Sun or rain, without you
So lonely, without you

So painful, without you
Getting up, without you
Sleeping, without you
Up all night, without you
Future, without you

Life without you
I mourn

Paul de Leeuw – You are always a part of us
Song lyrics translated from Dutch

Your feet never felt what grass is meant for
you never felt the warmth of the sun

Your hair never fluttered in the wind
and I have no idea what songs you like

Your hands never got to play
your feet never stood on this world

But still you are
always a part of us

Never have I felt your love more strongly
as in this moment
you are the source of a never
ending warm glow

I carry you in my heart, my baby forever
and in that way I will never lose you

Loving you is letting you go
giving you back to where you came from

But still you are
always a part of us

