



Bereavement

Information for parents
whose baby has died



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When a baby dies before or soon after birth

We wish to offer our sympathy to you and your family on the loss of your baby. The loss of a baby is one of the most painful experiences imaginable. Finding out that your baby has died at any stage during the pregnancy comes as an enormous shock to parents. We will try to help and support you through this difficult time.

We have written this booklet to provide you with some practical information about the supports available within the hospital and to tell you about the various funeral options. We will provide you with any additional information you might find helpful and we will give you contact details for some bereavement support organisations and some information booklets.

Bereavement symbol

The bereavement symbol was developed by the Hospice Friendly Hospitals Programme. We use it on your healthcare record and on the door of your room. It lets staff know that you and your family have had a recent bereavement.



Bereavement support team

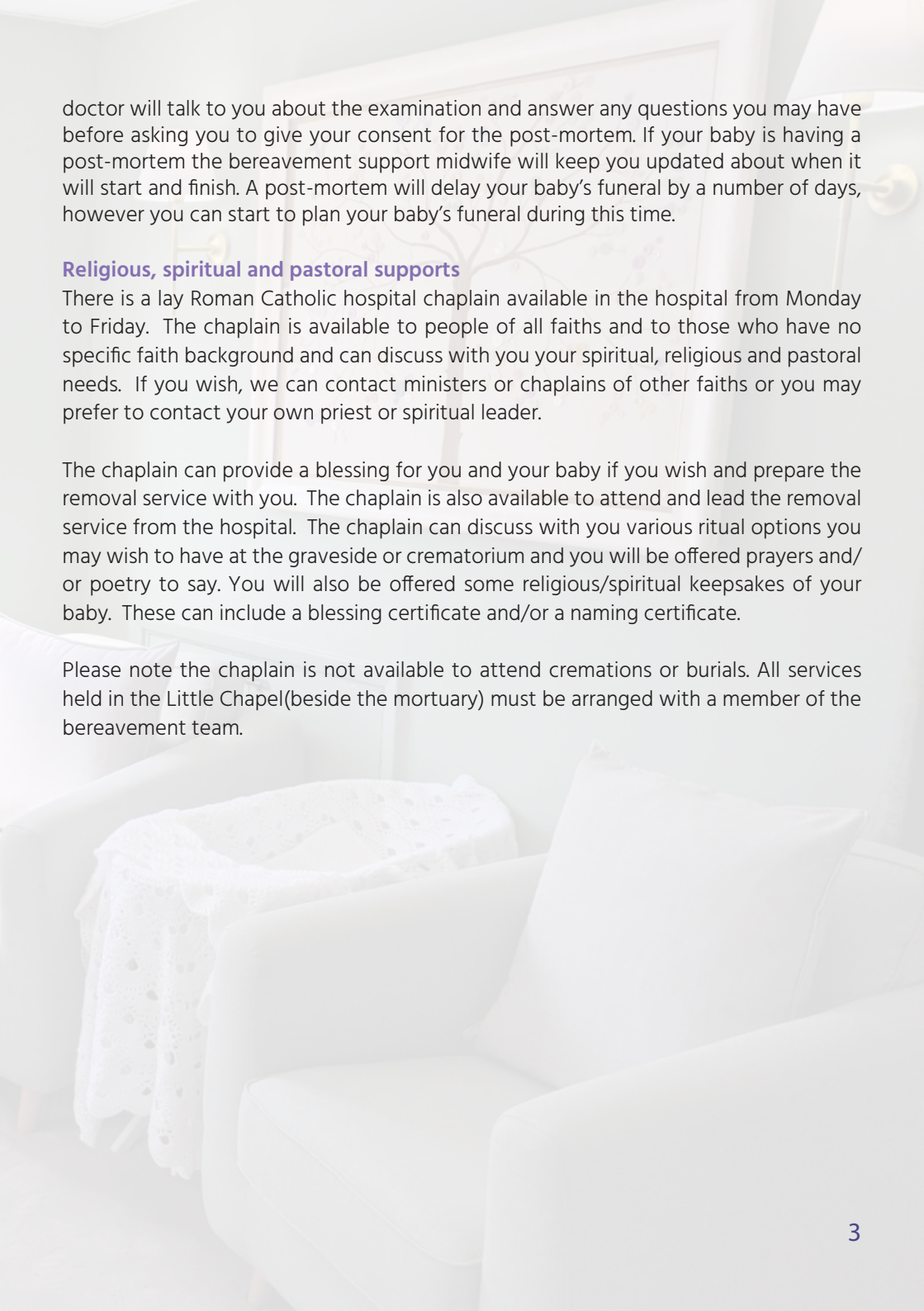
The Rotunda realises the importance of helping and supporting parents around the time their baby dies. We have a team of staff to support you regardless of the circumstances of your loss. The bereavement support midwife, chaplain, bereavement social worker and staff involved in caring for you work very closely together. Do not hesitate to ask a member of the team for any additional support you may require.

Bereavement support midwife

The bereavement support midwife is available in the hospital from Monday to Friday. She can offer practical and emotional support and liaise with anyone else that you may need to meet following your baby's death. She will visit you on the ward and give you time to talk about the loss of your little baby. If she does not meet you on the ward she will contact you by phone after you have gone home. She will support you if you would like to spend time with your baby and will also help you to make funeral arrangements over the coming days.

When a baby dies, parents have many questions about the cause of death. In Ireland it is a legal requirement that all Stillbirths, Neonatal deaths and some other types of deaths are reported to the Coroner. The Coroner may instruct the hospital that a coroners post-mortem must be undertaken. If the coroner does not order a post mortem, you may still wish to consider having a post-mortem carried out on your baby.

A post-mortem is an examination of a person's body after death. A post-mortem examination can often provide more information about what caused your baby's death. If there is to be a post-mortem, we will give you information about this, and your

A softly lit room with a white sofa and a framed picture on the wall. The room is bright and airy, with a white lace blanket draped over the sofa. The background shows a window with a view of trees and a framed picture on the wall.

doctor will talk to you about the examination and answer any questions you may have before asking you to give your consent for the post-mortem. If your baby is having a post-mortem the bereavement support midwife will keep you updated about when it will start and finish. A post-mortem will delay your baby's funeral by a number of days, however you can start to plan your baby's funeral during this time.

Religious, spiritual and pastoral supports

There is a lay Roman Catholic hospital chaplain available in the hospital from Monday to Friday. The chaplain is available to people of all faiths and to those who have no specific faith background and can discuss with you your spiritual, religious and pastoral needs. If you wish, we can contact ministers or chaplains of other faiths or you may prefer to contact your own priest or spiritual leader.

The chaplain can provide a blessing for you and your baby if you wish and prepare the removal service with you. The chaplain is also available to attend and lead the removal service from the hospital. The chaplain can discuss with you various ritual options you may wish to have at the graveside or crematorium and you will be offered prayers and/or poetry to say. You will also be offered some religious/spiritual keepsakes of your baby. These can include a blessing certificate and/or a naming certificate.

Please note the chaplain is not available to attend cremations or burials. All services held in the Little Chapel(beside the mortuary) must be arranged with a member of the bereavement team.

Bereavement social worker

The Bereavement Social Worker may visit you while you are still in hospital or contact you at home. She will inform you about the supportive counselling services which are available within the hospital and within the community. She can also assist you with any social or practical issues you might have. Some parents find it helpful to talk to the Bereavement Social Worker about how to tell their other children that their little baby brother or sister has died.

If you had a multiple pregnancy, and one baby dies you will probably feel very confused with so many emotions being experienced at the same time – joy for your surviving baby and grief for the baby who has died. The bereavement social worker can support you as you are facing this multitude of mixed emotions.

Some couples do not feel the need to access counselling support. For others, in the weeks or months that follow the loss of their baby, they may wish to avail of this support. Please be aware that you can contact the Bereavement Social Worker about counselling support at any time following your loss.

Depending on your baby's gestation, there is an organisation of professional volunteer photographers available to come in to the hospital at your invitation to take photographs of you and your baby. If you wish to avail of this service you, or a member of your family can discuss this further with a member of the Bereavement Team. You may of course take your own photographs.

If possible, we may be able to make ceramic impressions of your baby's hand and footprints. We may also be able to take ink hand and footprints. The staff will discuss this with you after your baby is born.

Funeral options

Prior to your baby's funeral you can bring your baby home overnight if you wish – the bereavement team can discuss this with you and help you to arrange to bring your baby home. There are a number of funeral options available to you. You can choose between burial or cremation.

There are different burial options available to you – burial in a family grave or burial in the Angels' Remembrance Garden.

a) Private burial in a family grave

A private burial can take place in a new or existing family grave. If you are planning a private burial with your own funeral directors please inform the bereavement midwife so as to ensure the smooth coordination of your baby's removal from the hospital. The burial is organised by the family. You should contact the funeral director or the cemetery staff directly to arrange the opening of a new or existing plot. Permission from the grave owner will be required to open an existing plot. Burials usually take place Monday to Saturday and you will need to finalise the arrangements with them 24 hours before the burial.

b) Burial in the Angels' Remembrance Garden, Glasnevin cemetery

The Angels' Remembrance Garden is located in Glasnevin cemetery, several babies are buried in the same grave. Glasnevin allocates the time for burials Monday to Friday in the morning.

If you choose this option your baby will be placed in a coffin and transferred to the cemetery for burial in a shared grave. You and your family can attend the burial service if you wish. If you are attending the service you can take your baby's remains in a coffin either from the hospital or from your home to the cemetery in your car. When you arrive at the cemetery a grave tender will take you to the graveside. If you are not attending the burial, the hospital funeral directors will take your baby to the cemetery for you. The hospital will assist you with making the burial arrangements.

General information about burials in the Angels' Remembrance Garden

We recommend you visit the cemetery before making a final decision on the place of burial. You can put fresh flowers on the grave but permanent and personal mementoes including teddies, toys and other keepsakes are not allowed and will be removed. There is a large headstone for each plot and if you wish your baby's name to be inscribed on the headstone, please contact Glasnevin Monument Works directly and they will tell you how this can be done and how much it will cost.

Because babies are buried in a shared grave in the Angels Remembrance Garden, it is not possible to have your baby exhumed and moved to a different grave in the future.

c) Cremation

Depending on which crematorium you choose, there may or may not be ashes after the cremation of your baby. The Rotunda uses Mount Jerome crematorium, as there are always ashes available after cremation. The bereavement support midwife can give you information on all crematoria, and can help you with the arrangements. The hospital can facilitate cremations Monday to Friday

There is a special form to be completed prior to cremation, part of which must be completed by parents. The bereavement support midwife will help you to complete the form. The completed form must be sent to the crematorium by midday on the day before the cremation. Arrangements for the cremation can be finalised once permission to go ahead has been granted by the crematorium.

Ashes

Ashes are usually ready to be collected 5-7 working days after the cremation. Please contact Mount Jerome directly to arrange to collect your baby's ashes. Contact details at the back of this booklet.

Costs

The hospital pays for the white coffin/willow basket and cremation in Mount Jerome.

Coffin and Willow Basket Information

Supplied and delivered to the hospital by:

Kirwans Funeral Directors

21-23 Fairview Strand

Dublin 3

(01) 833 4444

www.kirwans.ie

See sample images of baskets and coffins below - real samples may be viewed in The Little Chapel, besides the mortuary



Willow Baskets

14" or 18" or 24" in length

Name plate necessary

Crucifix optional

Supplied by The Rotunda Hospital



White Coffin

14" or 19" or 2'3" in length

Name plate necessary

Crucifix optional

Supplied by The Rotunda Hospital

Baby _____
20th January 2021
Always in our hearts
Love Mammy & Daddy xx

Name Plate

Here is an example of what a name plate may look like

First line - Baby's name

Second line - date of death

Third and fourth lines - short message

Alternatively families may prefer to source their own coffin/willow basket and bring it to the hospital.

Preparing for the funeral

There is no need to rush the funeral arrangements. We suggest you wait a few days to allow you some time to recover from the birth and also to allow you and your family to prepare for your baby's funeral. You may want to invite family and friends to the funeral service.

You can provide clothes for your baby to wear or else we can provide them. Take as many photographs as you wish of your baby. Where possible, we will offer you some keepsakes of your baby, which may include footprints, handprints, a lock of hair, clothes they wore, a blanket they were wrapped in or their hospital bracelet. Some people like to place special family mementoes in the baby's coffin, for example, a family photograph, a letter or a little toy. There are some restrictions on what can be placed in a coffin if you choose cremation and the bereavement support midwife will discuss these with you.

Prior to your baby leaving the hospital

You may wish to have a prayer service, naming ceremony or blessing service in the hospital. This may be facilitated by the hospital chaplain, or your own spiritual leader. You can take your baby home the evening before the burial or the cremation if you wish, provided there are no medical or safety concerns.

Follow-up care

If your baby died before 16 weeks of pregnancy you will usually be advised to attend your GP for follow-up care unless your doctor thinks you need a hospital appointment. If you have a history of three or more consecutive miscarriages, you will be offered an appointment at the recurrent miscarriage clinic in the hospital for follow-up care and investigations.

If your baby died after 16 weeks and/or your baby had a post mortem you will be offered an appointment to attend the designated bereavement clinic in the Rotunda. You will receive a phone call when all the results are back to arrange this appointment. A senior doctor and the bereavement support midwife will facilitate you at the bereavement clinic. If you have been attending the fetal assessment unit or a consultant privately, you will be seen by them instead. We will contact you by phone with an appointment for the bereavement clinic up to ten weeks after your baby died, or when the post-mortem report is completed which normally takes 10 to 12 weeks.

The purpose of the appointment is to discuss your baby's death and address any issues you might have, including planning a future pregnancy. (This appointment does not

include a physical check-up after birth. You should arrange this with your GP for around 6 weeks after your baby died). If you would like to see the bereavement social worker on the day of your appointment please let us know and we can arrange for her to contact you.

Book of remembrance

The Book of Remembrance is reserved in the hospital. Babies' names are not automatically entered into the Book of Remembrance, only at the request of parents. The Book of Remembrance contains a page for each day of the year. Your baby's name will be entered on the page, which has the date (e.g. 14th November) your baby died. If you wish to have your baby's name entered into the book, please complete the form on the second last page of this booklet and return to the chaplain by 1st September in any given year if you would like to see your baby's name in the book at the Remembrance service in November.

Alternatively, you may make an individual appointment to visit the book. To do so please make contact with the Hospital Chaplain, Telephone 01 – 8171700 bleep 334, Monday to Friday. Periodically the Book of Remembrance will be removed so that new names can be entered.

Annual service of remembrance

The Rotunda Hospital holds an annual service of remembrance for people whose baby has died through miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirth neonatal death, or fetal anomaly. People who have been recently or long ago bereaved are welcome to attend. All are welcome regardless of the circumstances of the death. From 2021 onwards the Remembrance Service will be held in St. Saviour's Church Dominick Street, Dublin 1 on a Sunday in 17th November at 3.00 pm. Please contact the hospital chaplain, bereavement support midwife or social worker to ascertain the date of the Remembrance Service on each given year.



Information on registration of births and deaths

A stillbirth certificate will be issued for babies born weighing 500 grams or more, or having a gestational age of 24 weeks or more and who show no sign of life at birth.

If your baby lived for a short time, you are entitled to both a birth and a death certificate from your local civil registration service. The birth notification staff in the hospital will automatically forward all the details required to register your baby's birth to the registrars office. They will only contact you by phone if they need to clarify any details. The birth certificate will be available from your local civil registration office 14 days after we have notified them.

If your baby died after birth, the hospital doctor will complete a medical certificate of death and the birth notification staff will send this to you at home. They will phone you before they send it so you know to expect it. This will only happen after you have received all test results including post mortem results. You must take this medical certificate to your local civil registration office and register your baby's death. You will then be issued with a death certificate.

When a death is reported to the coroner and a post-mortem examination or inquest is required, the coroner will register the death after the post-mortem report has been finalised or an inquest has been held. This will take a number of months and in some circumstances a lot longer. The death certificate can then be obtained by you from your local civil registration office.

You can get the contact details for your local civil registration service from the birth notification staff.

Dublin Area

The Civil Registration Service,
Ground Floor,
Lucia House,
12-14 Lombard Street East,
Dublin 2.

Tel 01- 863 8200

Hours of opening – Monday to Friday 9.30 am to 4.30 pm

Improving the quality of the service we provide

Our aim is to provide you with the best possible care and service we can at such a difficult time for you and your family. If we can provide you with any additional information or help, please do not hesitate to ask.

Support information

A Little Lifetime Foundation	www.alittlelifetime.ie
Ectopic Pregnancy Ireland	www.ectopicireland.ie
Féileacáin	www.feileacain.ie (085) 249 6464
Tony Owens, Dublin based Féileacáin	(087) 352 0429
Irish Childhood Bereavement Network	www.childhoodbereavement.ie
Miscarriage Association of Ireland	www.miscarriage.ie
Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep	www.nilmdts.org (083) 3774777
HSE Website	www.pregnancyandinfantloss.ie
Treasured Keepsakes	www.treasuredkeepsakes.ie
Twins and Multiple Birth Association	www.twinstrust.org/bereavement.html

These organisations provide support and some services to parents and families. Their full contact details are available on their websites. Other organisations are also available and may be found online

Useful Contact Details

Bereavement Support Midwife Trish Butler Carol Rock	01 – 817 1700 (Bleep 777) 087 – 682 2639 bereavement@rotunda.ie
Assistant Director of Midwifery	01 – 817 1700 (Bleep 350) (out of hours support)
Hospital Chaplain Ann Charlton	01 – 817 1700 (Bleep 334) acharlton@rotunda.ie
Social Worker Bereavement	01 – 817 1722
Rotunda’s Birth Notification Office	01 – 817 1726
Rotunda’s website	www.rotunda.ie
Glasnevin Trust (Includes Glasnevin, Dardistown & Newlands Cross)	01 – 882 6500 www.glasnevintrust.ie
Glasnevin Monument Works	01 – 882 6520
Mount Jerome	01 – 497 1269 www.mountjerome.ie medref@mountjerome.ie
Kirwans Funeral Directors	01 – 833 4444 www.kirwans.ie/fairview
Bereavement Administrator Ciara O’Connor	01 - 817 1783



BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

Section A (Please use BLOCK CAPITALS)

Name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Remembered by: _____

Section B

Name(s) of requestor(s): _____

Signature of requestor(s): _____

Address: _____

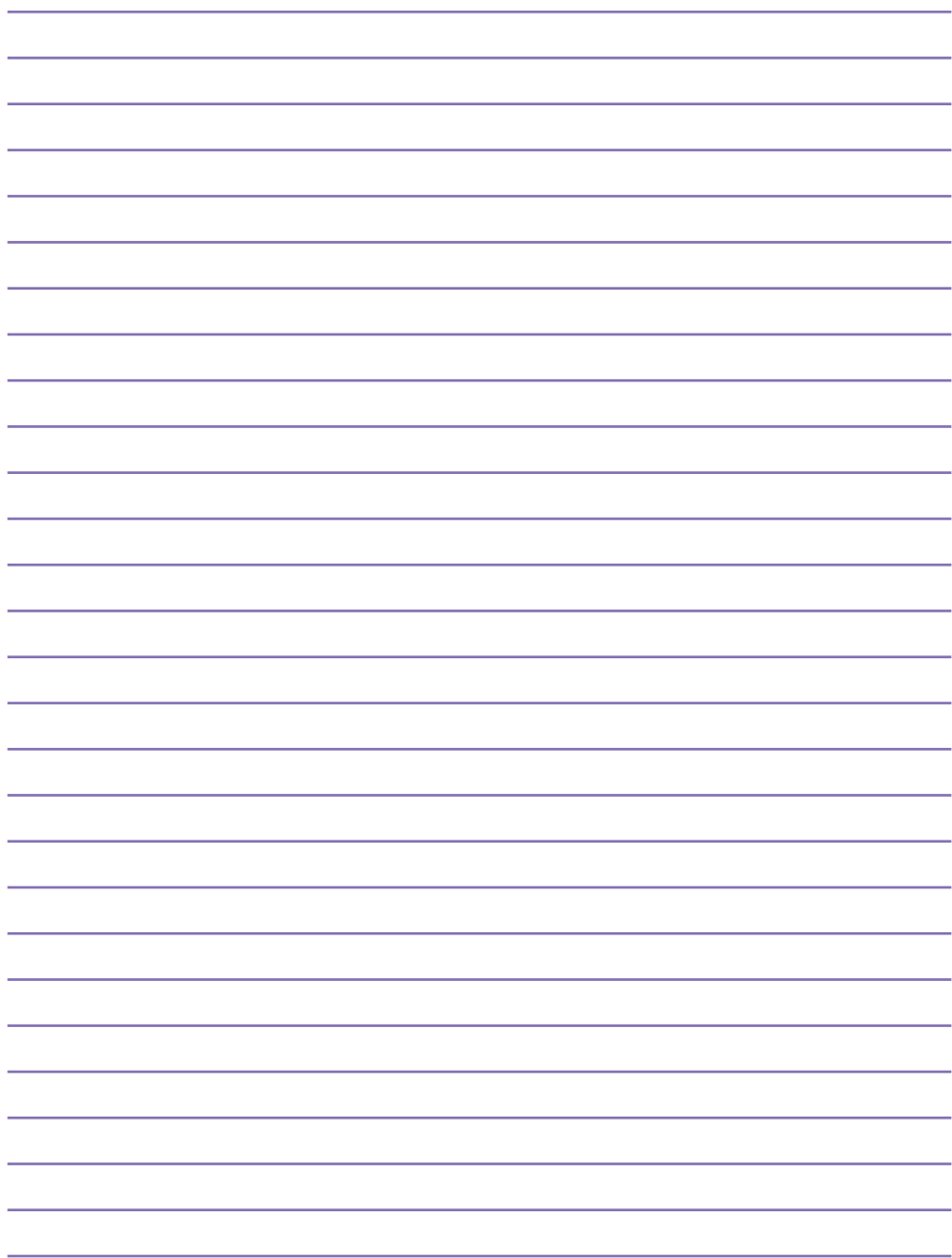
Date your baby died:

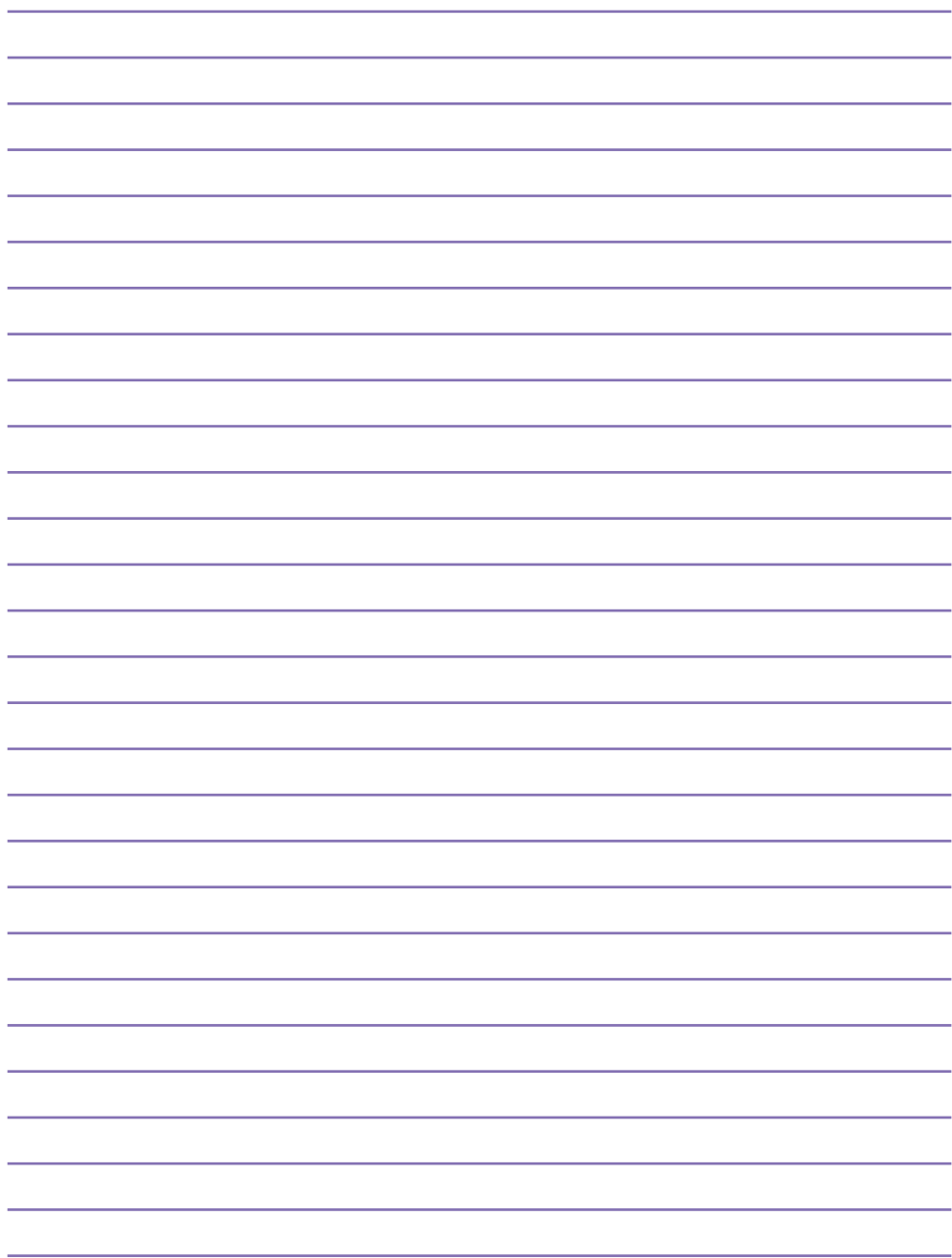
Day: _____ Month: _____ Year: _____

Please return to Ann Charlton Chaplain,
The Rotunda Hospital, Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

In line with current data protection legislation this
information will only be kept for one year.







Plant this butterfly in your garden and
wildflowers will blossom year after year
in memory of your baby



We Remember



**THE
ROTUNDA
HOSPITAL**
DUBLIN

The Rotunda Hospital
Version 2.0 April 2024