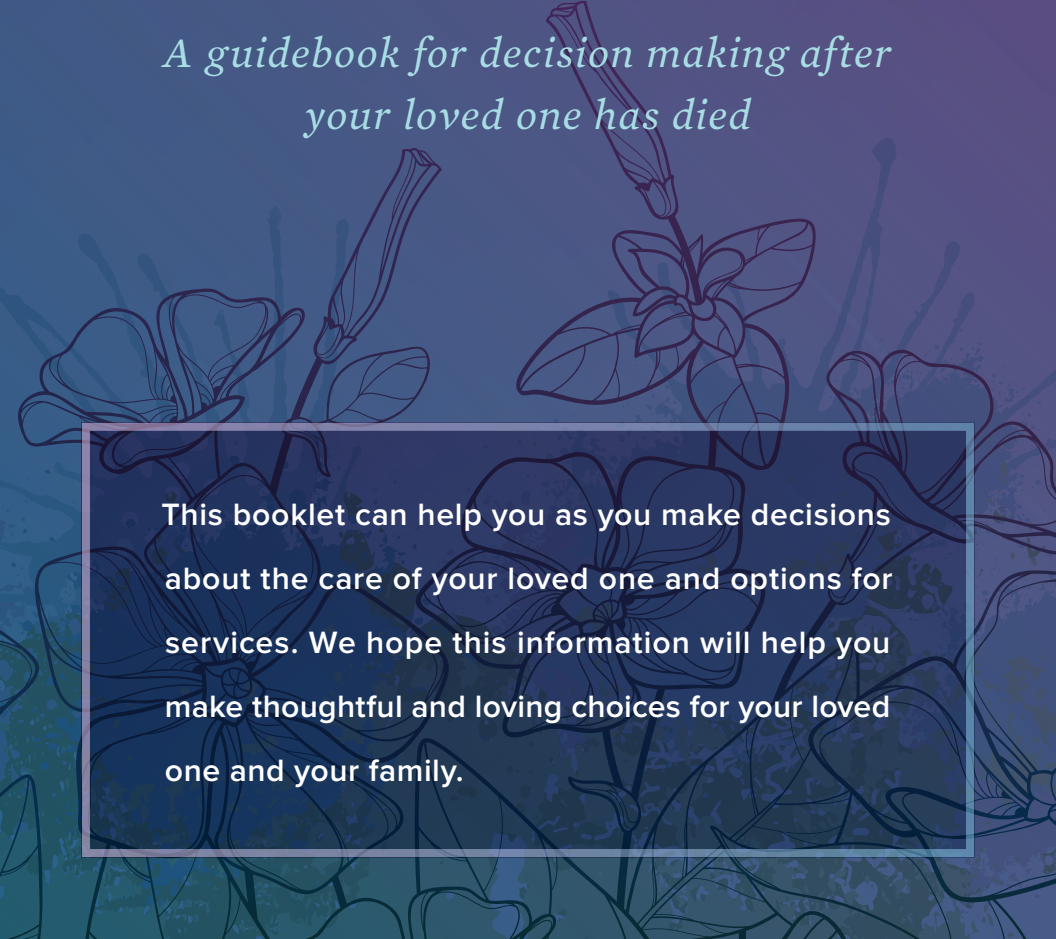




# The First Few Days



*A guidebook for decision making after  
your loved one has died*



This booklet can help you as you make decisions about the care of your loved one and options for services. We hope this information will help you make thoughtful and loving choices for your loved one and your family.

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*The department of pastoral care at Cincinnati Children's extends our sympathy as you grieve the death of your loved one. We recognize that this is a difficult time for you and your family. We hope this booklet will help guide you through some of the more immediate decisions you will make to honor your loved one.*

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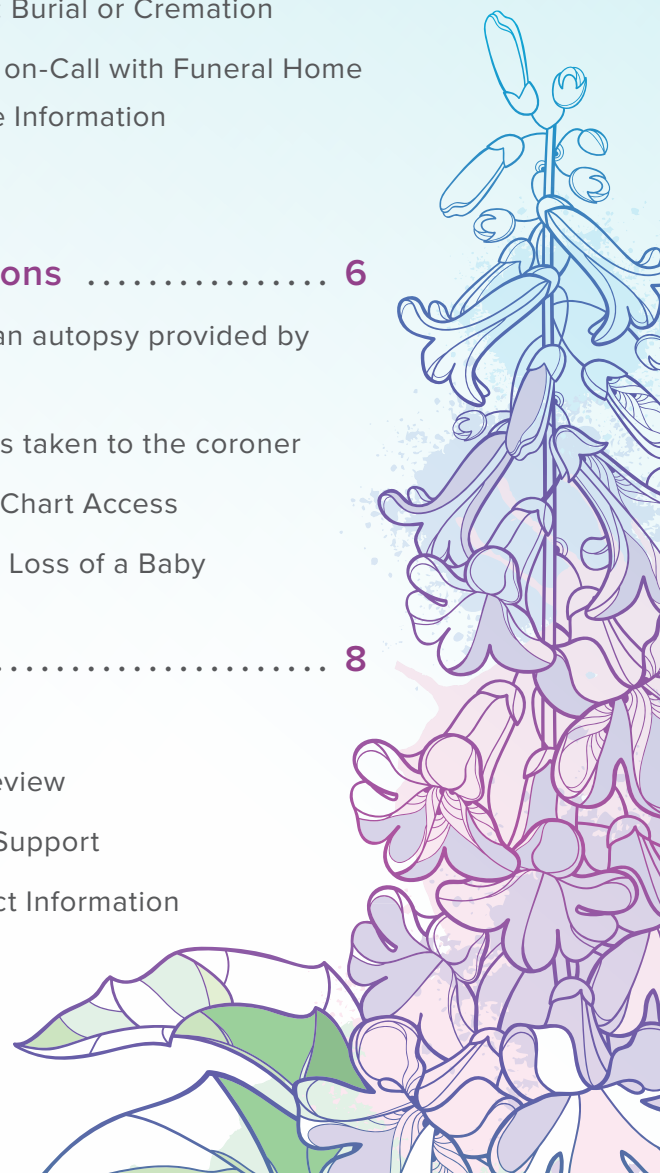
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# Funeral Home & Cremation Services

*One of the first decisions you will need to make is which funeral home or cremation service to use. If you do not know of a funeral home or cremation service in your hometown, ask a family member, neighbor, or someone in your faith community to help you identify someone. You do not have to decide at the hospital before you leave.*

If you prefer, you may communicate your decision to the chaplain on-call over the phone in the next day or two. Please find this information listed under *contacting chaplain on-call with funeral home or cremation service information* on **page 4**.

At this time, you may also consider developing content for your loved one's obituary. Many funeral homes or cremation services can offer you support with writing and publishing the obituary. Be sure to discuss your financial needs or concerns with the funeral director. Some may provide services to infants and children at a reduced cost.

## Out-of-State Arrangements

If you would prefer burial or cremation to take place outside of the Cincinnati area, first identify a funeral home or cremation service that is close to where you live. Your local funeral home will work with a funeral service based in Cincinnati to secure the best options in transporting your loved one home.

## Options to Consider: Burial or Cremation

### Burial

Some families prefer the option of burial. If you choose this, you will need to consider:

- Is the cemetery near your home so you can visit?
- Does it meet your religious or cultural requirements?
- Is maintenance included in the cost?
- Is there additional space for other family members?
- What are the restrictions on the type of monument, plants, flowers, or decorations you can put on the grave?

A funeral director will help answer your questions and provide the detailed information you need to make your decision.


### Cremation

Some families prefer the option of cremation. With cremation, you have the option of burying, keeping, or scattering your loved one's ashes.

- If you choose cremation, you may still have a viewing prior and/or a service before or after cremation if you wish.
- Typically, cremation is less costly than a burial.
- Cremation may also best fit your family's needs if you plan to move out of the area at some point in the future.

## Contacting Chaplain on-Call with Funeral Home or Cremation Service Information

If a selection of funeral home or cremation service was not communicated before leaving the hospital, call the chaplain on-call within a day or two to provide this information.


- Please call  **513-636-4200** and ask for chaplain on-call to be paged.

You will need to provide the following information:



- Name of funeral home or cremation service
- Their address with zip code
- Their phone number with area code

## Death Certificate

- Most funeral homes or cremation services can assist you with obtaining a death certificate. If they are unable, visit the Bureau of Vital Statistics webpage:

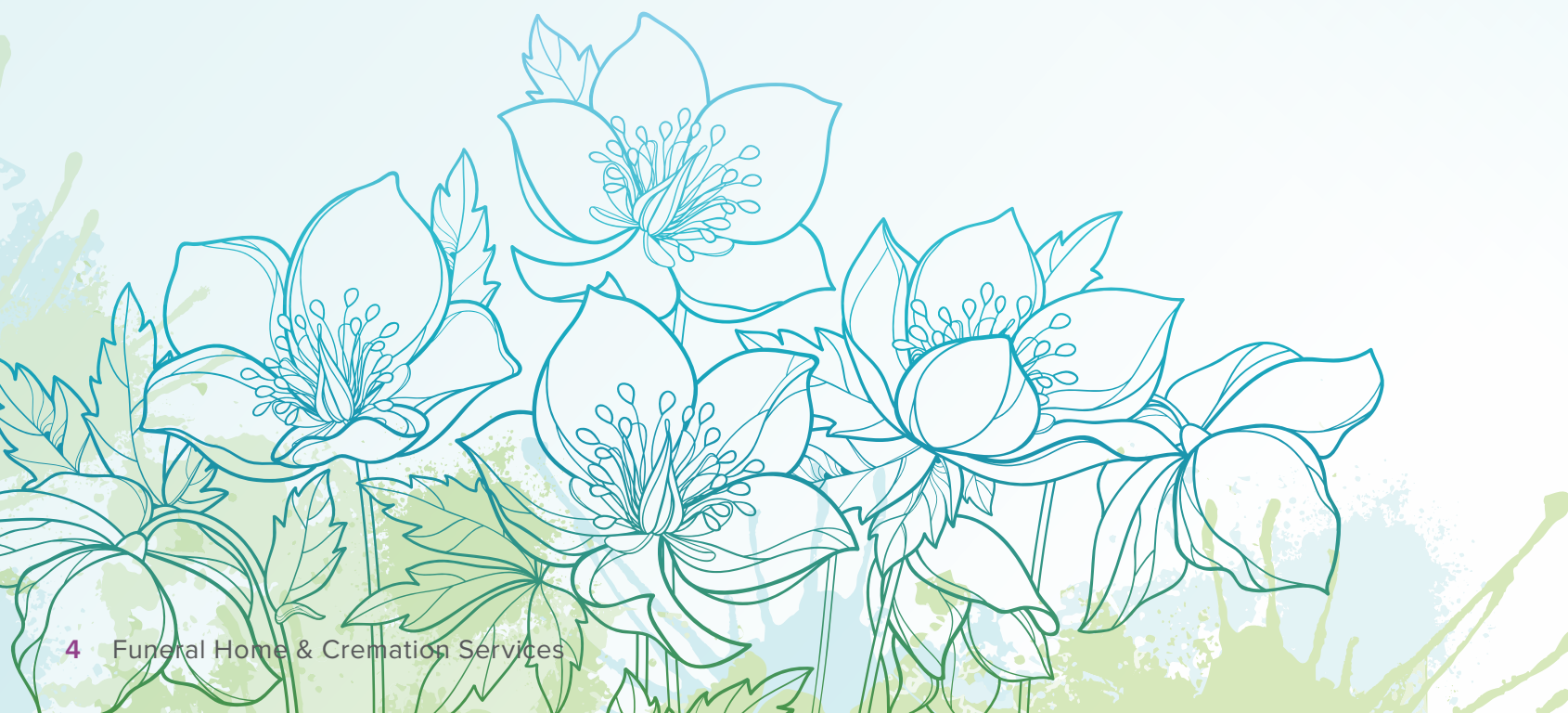
 [odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/vital-statistics](https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/vital-statistics)

Or reach the Ohio Department of Health at:

 [odh.ohio.gov](https://odh.ohio.gov) or call  **614-466-3543**

- The United States Social Security Administration needs to be notified after the death of a loved one. The funeral home or cremation service can assist you with this task.
- Social Security survivor benefits are paid to widows, widowers, and dependents of eligible workers. For more information, visit:

 [ssa.gov](https://ssa.gov) or call  **1-800-772-1213**



# Other Considerations

## If you consented to an autopsy provided by Cincinnati Children's:

- The funeral home or crematory you chose will be contacted by the chaplain on-call when the autopsy is completed. This usually happens within 24–48 hours after the death.
- It takes approximately 90 days for the report to be available.
- Your loved one's medical providers are available to review autopsy reports with you and your family.
- You can request a copy of autopsy results by calling medical records. They will walk you through the necessary release forms.  
➤ **513-636-4217**
- If you have questions, please contact the chaplain on-call.

## If your loved one was taken to the coroner:

- If you have questions while your loved one is in the care of the coroner, you will need to call the coroner's office directly. The coroner's office is not a part of Cincinnati Children's.
- Please call the coroner regarding decisions you have made for your loved one regarding funeral home or cremation services.
- To contact the coroner, call:
  - Hamilton County: ☎ **513-946-8700**
  - Butler County: ☎ **513-785-5860**

## Questions About MyChart Access

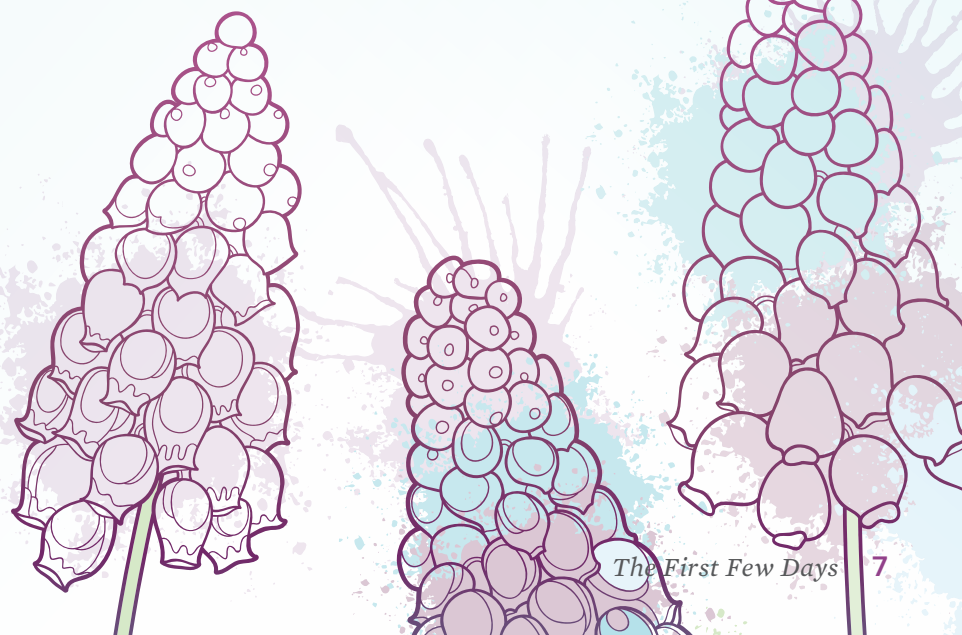
Your access to your loved one's MyChart account will be disconnected. If you would like to be reconnected, please contact a member of the bereavement team to help you. Contact information can be found at the end of this booklet.

## Breast Milk After the Loss of a Baby

One of the hardships a mother immediately faces after the loss of a baby is deciding what to do with her breast milk. For breastfeeding questions, information about services, or to schedule an appointment at the breastfeeding medicine clinic, call: ☎ **513-636-2326**

For additional information and resources, visit:

➤ [cincinnatichildrens.org/milkandloss](https://cincinnatichildrens.org/milkandloss)



## Planning a Service

In the midst of grief and sadness, many people find it comforting to make meaningful decisions about how to honor their loved one. Your spiritual leader or the funeral home or cremation service director working with you and your family can assist you in planning a service for your loved one. There are many ways to make the service personal and to share your loved one's life with others at the funeral.

### Here are a few suggestions for planning a service of remembrance:

- Invite family, friends, and colleagues to be part of the planning process and participate in the service.
- Collect photographs for a slideshow or a picture collage.
- Consider directing memorial contributions to a cause that is meaningful to your loved one or family.
- Display your loved one's favorite toys, or other sentimental items.
- Play your loved one's favorite music.
- Think of your loved one's favorite colors, hobbies, or other interests to incorporate.
- After the service, consider serving your loved one's favorite foods or beverages.

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*There is no right way or wrong way to plan the service honoring your loved one. Take the time you need to make decisions regarding the service.*

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## Post-Loss Clinical Review

After a loss, some families find that they have questions about their loved one's condition and care. These questions may arise days, weeks, or even months after the death. When this happens, a follow up conversation with members of the loved one's clinical team may be helpful.

If you or your family members find that you have questions from your loved one's time as a patient with Cincinnati Children's, we welcome the chance to talk with you. We will work with you to identify the individuals who are best able to answer your questions and will arrange a time for follow-up, either in-person or by phone.

Our bereavement coordinators are available to assist you with this process:  **513-636-7720** or  **bereavement\_care@cchmc.org**

## Resources for Grief Support

**Association for Death Education and Counseling**  
adec.org • 847-509-0403

**Cancer Family Care**  
cancerfamilycare.org • 513-731-3346

**Centering Corporation and Grief Digest Magazine**  
centering.org • 402-553-1200

**Center For Loss & Life Transition**  
centerforloss.com • 970-226-6050

**The Compassionate Friends: Supporting Family After a Child Dies**  
compassionatefriends.org • 1-877-969-0010 (toll-free)

**The Dougy Center: A National Center for Grieving Children & Families**  
dougy.org • 503-775-5683

**Fernside: Supporting Children and Families Through Grief**  
fernside.org • 513-246-9140

**Grief Watch: Your Resource for Dealing with Loss**  
griefwatch.com • 503-248-7426

**Living With Loss and Bereavement Publishing, Inc.**  
livingwithloss.com • 1-888-604-4673 (toll-free)

**Stars: Grief Support Groups at St. Elizabeth Hospice**  
stelizabeth.com/medical-services/hospice/support/grief-support/stars-support-groups  
• 859-301-4611

**The Best Day Ever Foundation: Supporting Families After Grieving the Loss of a Child**  
bestdayeverfoundation.us • 513-378-4181

**Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Network**  
sids-network.org • 860-892-7042

## \*Financial Assistance for Funeral Expenses

### Children's Burial Assistance

📍 [childrensburial.org](http://childrensburial.org)  
☎️ 404-507-6310

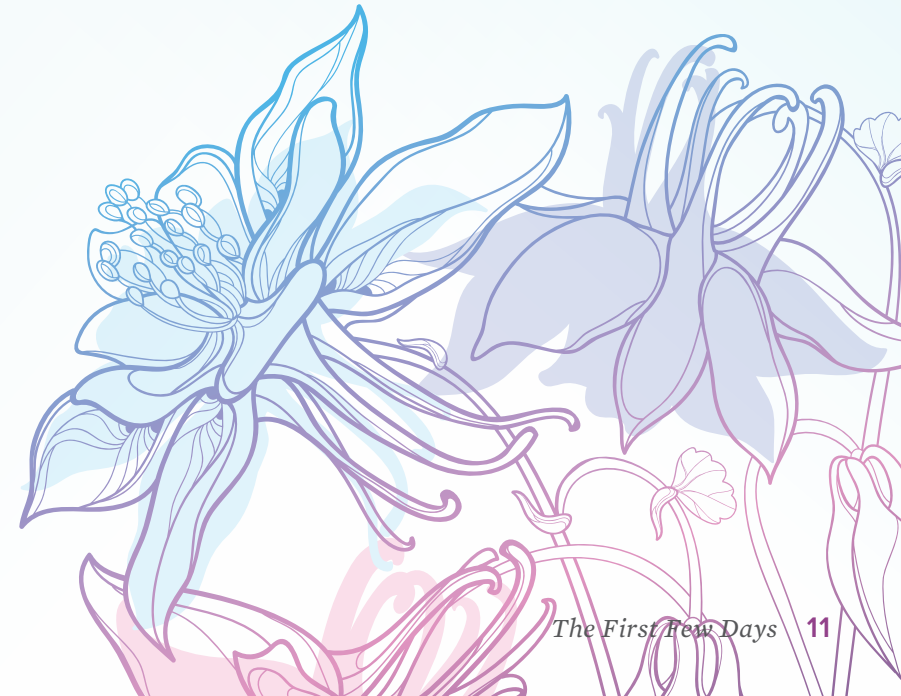
### The Tears Foundation

📍 [thetearsfoundation.org](http://thetearsfoundation.org)  
☎️ 253-200-0944

### Final Farewell


📍 [finalfarewell.org](http://finalfarewell.org)  
☎️ 215-870-8110


*\*We are not affiliated with these organizations and cannot guarantee that financial assistance will be provided.*



*If you have any questions, need further assistance, or are seeking support, we are here for you.*

**Bereavement Care Team:**


 **513-636-7720**

 **bereavement\_care@cchmc.org**

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*Additionally, our chaplains are available any time.*

**Pastoral Care:**

 **513-636-4200** (ask the operator to page the on-call chaplain)

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*We hope this booklet is helpful as you leave the hospital and make plans to honor your loved one. In the next few weeks, you will receive other support materials from us in the mail. In addition, a member of the bereavement team will contact you by phone to offer support. Please know we are available to support you and your family.*

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