

Questions from Multiple Birth Loss Parents

This brochure has been designed to share some of the questions commonly asked by parents who lose a child, or children in a multiple birth situation. Hopefully, by providing such information, bereaved parents, and even multiple birth survivors will feel less alone, knowing that there are other people who are able to understand, and in turn, provide some form of emotional support.

The information published within this brochure has been based upon feedback received from multiple birth loss families.

The NTLs Facebook page provides a secure area in which multiple birth loss families can find out more detailed information, share poems, start discussions, or leave a dedication to their deceased child, or children.

Membership to the National Twin Loss Support Facebook page is conditional and remains at the discretion of the Executive Administrative Team.



Multiple Birth Loss Care

Although modern society seems to have greatly progressed in its more positive attitude towards bereavement care, attention to multiple pregnancy loss issues is still lagging behind.

National Twin Loss Support, (under the name of Murraylands Twin Loss), was instrumental in working on an Australia wide project to place 'multiple pregnancy loss awareness kits' into hospitals with obstetrics units, in an attempt to better educate medical professionals on the unique needs of families who lose a twin/triplet/quadruplet.

Resource books such as "The Diary" and "The Survivor" have become valuable extensions of the work being done by National Twin Loss Support and can be purchased online from links on the NTLs website.

Over the years, National Twin Loss Support has worked hard to improve bereavement care education and has donated various books to local schools, hospitals, libraries and women's information centres.

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**I think I've discovered the secret of
life — you just hang around until you
get used to it.**

Charles M Schulz

NTLS

National Twin Loss Support

Established Oct. 1992



Questions from parents

www.nationaltwinloss.org.au

Disclaimer: This brochure is a simple, basic, informative guide about some of the issues that effect surviving twins and other higher order multiple birth children, from parental observation. It is not designed to replace professional medical advice.

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What is the correct term?

When referring to a loss in a twin pregnancy for example, there are a number of different terms which are commonly used to describe the child who was born alive.

Which term is used appears to be up to the individual, and is dependant upon their personal viewpoints. For instance, someone who uses the term, 'surviving twin' may feel that the child born alive is a true 'survivor'. This label is often felt to be more of a positive description.

Other people may use the term, 'Twinless twin' and this one in particular is often applied to adult twins who lose their sibling later in life. This term is sometimes considered to be an apt description of the emotional loneliness and isolation which can be experienced by twins whose siblings die.

The following is a short list of some of these terms. Personal preference will dictate which one is used:

- Surviving Twin;
- Twinless Twin;
- Wombtwin Survivor;
- Lone Twin.

One of my twins died. Am I still the mother of twins?

Yes! Once the parent of twins, or any other higher order multiple birth children such as triplets, or quadruplets, always a multiple birth parent.

Often health care professionals, in their attempts to try and lessen parental grief, will say the surviving child is no longer a twin, but this is incorrect. Psychological studies show that many surviving multiple birth children struggle throughout life, battling emotions of isolation, having trouble forming long-term relationships, and wondering why they feel 'different' from the rest of the world.

Much confusion has thus been generated for bereaved multiple birth loss families, as well as those around them. Women who lose a twin early in a pregnancy either as a result of miscarriage, or Vanishing Twin Syndrome, probably feel more sensitive about a question such as this because they have either very little tangible evidence, (E.g. an Ultrasound scan picture), or no tangible evidence at all that a multiple pregnancy ever existed.

Lack of tangible evidence to support the fact that a woman experienced a multiple pregnancy, makes it difficult to speak about their situation and explain it to friends and family.

Why do some people consider it 'socially unacceptable' to speak about my deceased child when it is ok to talk about a deceased parent or grandparent?

Modern Western culture remains quite sensitive about how, when and where a person speaks openly about a deceased relative, particularly when it relates to infant loss. Perhaps this is because people are worried about what to say, frightened of saying the 'wrong thing' and adding to the grief already being experienced by the bereaved family. Perhaps this is due to the fact that babies have had such a short life when compared with an older person. This makes the loss all the more tragic.

Ironically, by appearing to 'ignore' the deceased child, further pain is created because the bereaved family feel that those around them no longer care. This contributes to the emotional isolation that many bereaved parents say they experience.

People assume that by focusing on the living child, or children, that the grief will quickly pass, or will 'magically disappear'. Providing printed material for people to read often helps to release the tension and create valuable avenues through which to begin to share stories about the baby or babies who have died.

