



After a loved one has died

What is it?

After a loved one has died, your GP may sign a certificate that confirms the death. You cannot make funeral arrangements unless your GP has signed and issued this certificate.

The certificate is used by the funeral director, or the person managing the deceased person, to register the death with the Births, Deaths and Marriages registry in New South Wales.

What will my GP do now?

Your GP is required by law to confirm the identity of the deceased person, the cause of death, and the circumstances of death.

Your GP must also complete a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death or report the death to the coroner. A death is reportable to the coroner where a person has died:

- A violent or unnatural death
- A sudden death, the cause of which is unknown
- Under suspicious or unusual circumstances

If the death is reportable to the coroner, your GP will give you information about the process and support services. The certificate is also sent to the Australian Bureau of Statistics and used for analysis and public health planning.

Your GP may also complete a Cremation Certificate if relevant.

What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP may want to see you to talk to you about how you're feeling and if you need extra support to manage your emotions. Your GP may also:

- Talk to you about the grieving process and normal reactions
- Talk to you about medication if you are experiencing extreme distress
- Help relatives and close friends access support services

Your GP might also give you a referral for counselling if you want to talk to someone.

What can I do?

Immediately after a loved one has died there are certain steps to take. You will need to consider:

- Funeral arrangements
- Wills and insurance policies
- Notifying relevant people
- Financial assistance
- Support for extended family

What questions could I ask my doctor?

☐ What information do you need from me?

☐ What do I need to do now?

☐ What do I do with the certificate?

☐ What should I tell my family and friends?

☐ Who do I need to notify?



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What supports are available?

Crisis support

- **beyondblue:** Phone 1300 224 636 or visit beyondblue.org.au
- **Lifeline:** Phone 13 11 14 (24 hours) or visit lifeline.org.au

For children and young people

- **National Centre for Childhood Grief:** Phone 1300 654 556 or visit childhoodgrief.org.au
- **headspace** - Online support for young people: headspace.org.au
- **Canteen** - Phone, online, and face to face individual and group counselling for young people 12-25 years who have experienced cancer or lost a family member to cancer: Phone 1800 835 932 or visit canteen.org.au

For adults

- **The Compassionate Friends NSW** - Peer support group: Phone 1800 671 621 or visit tcfnsw.org.au
- **Leukaemia Foundation Grief Support** - Counselling and support groups for people who have lost someone to blood cancer: Phone 1800 620 420 or visit leukaemia.org.au
- **Sands** - Miscarriage, stillbirth and newborn death support: Phone 1300 072 637 or visit sands.org.au
- **Quest For Life** - Retreats for people dealing with grief: Phone 1300 941 488 or visit questforlife.org.au

For all ages

- **Grief Australia** - Counselling and support for all ages: grief.org.au
- **National Association for Loss and Grief:** nalag.org.au
- **Kids Helpline** - Support for kids, teens, young people, parents and teachers: kidshelpline.com.au
- **Southern Highlands Bereavement Care Service:** Phone 4862 1701 or visit shbcs.org.au

Online supports

See the [E-Health Grief and Loss](#) factsheet for details of online supports.

Private specialists

Speak to your GP about a referral to a private psychologist or counsellor.

Where can I learn more?

- **South Western Sydney Local Health District:** swslhd.health.nsw.gov.au
 - [Understanding Grief](#)
 - [Coping with anniversaries, religious celebrations and special occasions](#)
 - [Children and Grief – information for caregivers](#)
- **Services Australia** - Death of a loved one: services.gov.au
- **NSW Coroner's Court:** coroners.justice.nsw.gov.au
- **Services NSW** - Death and bereavement: service.nsw.gov.au

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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