

Although infant death is an uncommon occurrence, families sometimes have to cope with babies who have serious, chronic, and even fatal illnesses. Parents may walk an emotional tightrope between hope and despair for the long months that their child is ill.

## Caring for a Sick or Dying Infant Baby

As the family grapples with the serious illness and perhaps the imminent death of the baby, the infant must also cope with the consequences of their ill health. An infant's need to be cuddled is just as great as her requirement for food. She thrives on consistent care from her parents. A baby quickly comes to know and love these special people.

Separations, such as hospitalizations, can be very distressing for an infant. Parents of children of chronic diseases can sometimes arrange to care for the child at home with or without the assistance of a nurse. Should parents decide to bring their dying baby home, many communities have resources to assist them during this period [such as visiting nurses, home care nursing, and hospital care].

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During necessary hospitalizations, most hospitals allow parents unrestricted visiting privileges and often provide facilities for parents to room-in with the sick infant or child. These arrangements give parents the opportunity to participate in the care of their sick baby. Caution must be exercised not to spend so much time with the ill child that the well-being of the parents and other members of the family suffer.

Things to do that can help you cope with an ill or dying baby includes the following:

## BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

As recently as the late nineteenth century in the United States, one in five children died before the age of one year. Largely due to improved hygiene, immunizations, and antibiotics, babies in developed nations now die infrequently.

[Baby Gifts and Gift Baskets](#) provides timely and practical information for new moms, as well as gift ideas for pregnancy, baby showers, and to celebrate birth:

### New Baby Gift Ideas

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- Tell the physician and other hospital staff about your needs and the particular needs of your baby.
- Provide the hospitalized baby with her favorite toys and food. Display pictures of the family where she can see them. The entire family should visit the baby as often as is feasible.
- Obtain counseling with a skilled professional.
- Read about the subject. Most bookstore and libraries have many books for all age groups about coping with the illness or death of a loved one.
- Search out support groups, which exist for many types of chronic illnesses of childhood. There are also support groups to help parents adjust to the death of an infant.

## Baby's First Year Cake



All of baby's first year special occasions are covered with this unique and beautiful gift. A soft cuddly birthday plush bear sits atop the cake. Also included are a set of embroidered "baby's first" bibs - Christmas OR Chanukah, Easter OR Passover, Valentines Day, Halloween and First Birthday.

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- Allow siblings to visit the sick baby in the hospital.
- Attending funeral services that are brief and not morbid will help all family members to understand and except the finality of their loss.
- Keep lines of communication open between family members. Families that can share their feelings and console each other learn that even an enormous loss can be mastered.