

Steps to Take Pictures Using Immersion Photography

- Ensure parents and family have ample time to hold, touch and bond with babe prior to introducing Immersion Photography
- Provide any education or clarification parents and family may have prior to Immersion Therapy – Education sheet available through Krames
 - Staff should be familiar with the content of the education sheet prior to speaking or giving the education sheet to patient/family

Methodist Health System

Immersion Therapy after Fetal Loss

The death of a child is a difficult time for any family and the death of a preterm fetus is no exception. After death, there is a narrow window of opportunity to create memories.

What is Immersion Therapy?

Immersion therapy is the practice of fully immersing the infant in water or saline after they have passed away to preserve their appearance.

The water or saline is similar to the amniotic fluid of the mother's womb. This provides a natural environment for the baby. The water or saline can help improve the appearance of the babies' fragile skin and delicate features.

Using a clear tub, the baby is immersed in water or saline. The baby often has a softer, gentler appearance. Photographs can be taken through the clear walls of the tub. Depending on how long the baby has been immersed, the water or saline may need to be changed by your healthcare provider.

Why choose Immersion Therapy?

The time after your baby is born is sensitive and valuable. This will not affect the time you have to hold your baby. Immersion therapy can be done whether you choose to photograph your baby or not.

You decide if you are comfortable having pictures taken. You can also take part in this experience if you choose. Photos can help document details that you may not remember because your emotions are so powerful and overwhelming during this very difficult time. Sharing remembrance photos can have a powerful impact, not only for personal healing, but also in breaking down the stigma around discussing pregnancy and infant loss.

We are here to support you as you grieve and to honor your precious baby.

Process Change

• Use of materials to clothe babe

- Originally, the process was to remove all clothing from babe when using Immersion Photography. However, since that statement, we have found pictures are much better and the dignity of the babe is preserved if we utilize both stockinette hats and swaddles made from cheesecloth. We still advocate to use swaddles versus regular “baby clothing or outfits” as this conveys a more natural appearance of babe while in the Immersion Tub

• Keeping the materials outside the Immersion Tub

- With the use of inexpensive netting/tulle within the tub versus outside the tub, we have found the material masks the structure of the tub and provides a cushion and backdrop for the babe.
- The material used can be rinsed and given to parents if they desire but due to the low cost can also be discarded at the end of the photography session.

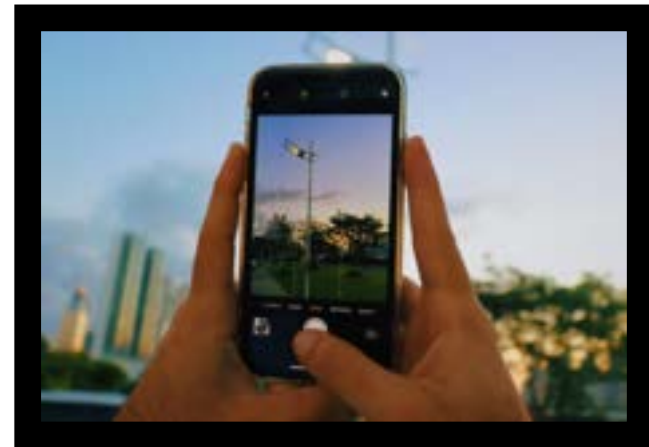
Process Change

- Taking pictures from the “Top” of the tub versus from the “Side” of the tub
 - Through much trial and error, with the use of swaddling and placing the draping materials within the tub, pictures appear much clearer and more precise when shooting the photos from the top of the tub
 - Utilizing pictures from the side of the tub may continue to be beneficial especially when taking photos of babe’s feet or hands

As a Reminder.....

- **For MWH employees:**

- Prior to taking any pictures with the designated phone/camera, **ALWAYS** take a picture of parent's armband/sticker before and after the **ALL-photo sessions**
- It is acceptable if parents request to use their own phone for pictures or videos
- Take 3 pictures of the same pose as once you edit a picture, the original picture is replaced with the edited photo



Steps to Take Pictures Using Immersion Photography

- You will use a total of 2 Immersion tubs
 - If there is a shortage of normal saline and distilled water, use tap water to fill the *initial* immersion tub
 - Use COLD water/saline
 - Note: the use of water may increase the chance of appearance of bubbles within the pictures





Steps to Take Pictures Using Immersion Photography

- Don gloves and place clear band (hair tie) tightly on umbilical cord close to babe and then remove plastic umbilical cord clamp
- Remove identification bands from babe and place the identifications in the clear plastic sleeve attached to the immersion tub



Setting up the tub for Immersion Photography

- Try to have natural light in the room
- Place the plexiglass tub on a firm surface (delivery cart that is locked or cart that is locked).
- Place clear netting or cheese cloth in the bottom of the tub and fill with cold water/saline. If using water, small bubbles may appear allow bubbles to dissipate prior to taking pictures.
- Netting/tulle material may tend to float, so gently use gloved hands and saturate the material to absorb water.
- **ALWAYS** prepare tub first prior to placing babe in tub. **AVOID** moving the tub once babe is placed in the tub for pictures

How to Prepare the Babe

- If babe's head is friable, consider using a stockinet hat to cover babe's head.
 - Prior to applying the stockinette to the babe's head, apply lubricant to the babe's head and then apply the hat. Avoid crochet hats since crochet does not stretch and may cause unintentional marks on the babe's head.
- Gently wrap babe in cheesecloth covering the torso and leaving the hands and feet exposed
 - This allows for focused pictures of the hands and feet



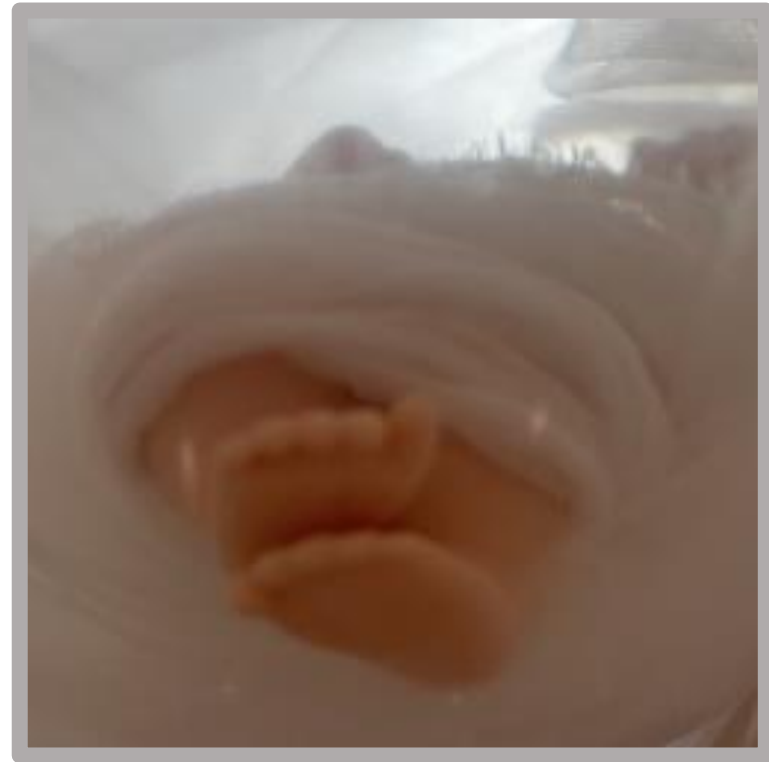
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6. With gloved hands, gently place babe in clean water/saline
 7. Attempt to position babe in a natural position with knees flexed, hands up towards the face, And use the cheesecloth to swaddle babe and cover majority of the babe's torso or body.



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- When capturing “full body” photos, take photos of babe from the top of the tub and crop and edit photos as needed



- When capturing specific parts of babe[hands or feet] take pictures from side of the tub and crop and edit photos as needed



- Note the photo on the left has portion of the tub and countertop.
- The photo on the right utilized the edit button & cropping feature on the phone

After Immersion Photography Session Has Ended

- With gloved hands, gently take babe out of the saline/water and place on firm surface
- Remove wet hat and swaddling materials and netting. Offer these to parents as mementos
 - If parents request materials, rinse materials, attempt to dry materials and then place the materials in plastic Ziplock bags
 - If parents decline materials discard materials
- If taking pictures of babe outside of Immersion Tub, use lubricant to protect babe's skin prior to dressing in swaddles or hats
 - Be aware that babe may ooze serous sanguineous fluid so placing a protective barrier between babe and swaddle may be beneficial.
 - Keeping babe cold may decrease this process
 - Change hat/swaddle/clothing as necessary

Cleaning of Tub

- With gloved hands, clean the tub with dish detergent and dry with cotton cloth



Resources

- Please text the following staff members for assistance or specific questions or concerns:
- Mary Seger Barker – 402-643-0279
- Kayla Brickell – 308-340-7878
- Sheri Kimmey – 402-415-4613

Avoid Calling the above numbers, unless leaving a voice message. Please attempt to text message or leave a voice messages during business hours. If you are working outside of normal business hours, we understand and are here to assist you with this process