

A Piece of My Heart

For any patient who has an ECG recording, a copy of their rhythm strip can be used to create a keepsake. Nursing research has demonstrated that this may provide an important source of comfort for grieving families, with a copyrighted project called “ECG Memento©”. Objects such as rhythm strips or other items that connect a family to a loved one after death can create continuing bonds that may help with healing.

If the patient does not have a current recording, a previous rhythm strip or a 12 lead ECG recording can be used. Make a copy of the 12 lead report and cut out a rhythm strip from the continuous recording at the bottom.

Try to obtain a strip without a lot of artifact. To obtain a tall enough strip, you can change the ECG size prior to printing. If the ECG recording has markings on it (for example some recordings will identify normal or premature beats with a letter or symbol), obtain a recording without these marks. This can be done at LHSC by enabling a second ECG wave. Click on the scale beside the second ECG wave to enlarge the rhythm strip before printing.

Any small container can be used. We use small glass bottles with cork stoppers that can be purchased in packs of 4-6 at the dollar store. You can even use a lab tube. Cut the strip horizontally so that the height of the strip fits in the bottle. Roll the strip up and insert into the bottle, printed sized showing.

Bottles can be placed into small bags (small fabric bags are also available at the dollar store). You can add an appropriately worded quote and tie they bag with a ribbon.

Examples of quotes that you can add to the bottle or bag:

You can type up a quote that is specific for the patient. Avoid using generic terms such as “loved one”, rather, personalize the quote with the dying patient’s name or relationship to the family member (Jean or “your Mom”). Use a font size that is sized for normal reading (small but not too small to read). A scripted font that is not bolded is recommended. You can personalize the words in the brackets.

May “Cathy’s” heartbeat be a reminder of the love that she had for “you”.

May my heartbeat always be a gentle reminder of the love I felt for you. (Quote by Lisa Beglarian)

“My” heart beat is a reminder of the life I lived and the love I felt.

References:

<https://sigma.nursingrepository.org/handle/10755/602750>

https://www.nursingcenter.com/journalarticle?Article_ID=4352155&Journal_ID=54014&Issue_ID=4351648

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