



# Taking Your Placenta Home

At BC Women's, our goal is to make sure your care is safe. If you choose to take your placenta home, you and your family should know about the risks and the right way to handle your placenta.

## Health and Safety

The placenta is a perfect place for germs to grow. Germs can cause infection and make people sick. To lower the risk of infection to you and other people these steps must be taken:

1. Take the placenta home right away and keep it in a cool place. It should be stored in a fridge (3-7°C) that does not hold any food. If you are planning on keeping the placenta for more than 2 days it must be frozen.
2. While the risk of getting an infection from a healthy placenta is low, standard cleaning habits must always be followed. To stop the risk of infection from germs when touching the placenta, wear gloves and cover cuts and scratches. Hands must be washed with soap and water after handling the placenta.



3. It is strongly urged that you or anyone else do not eat your placenta in any form.
4. If the placenta is buried, it is recommended that it be buried no less than one meter deep and away from water sources to stop it from being eaten by animals and being a source of infection to people.
5. The placenta cannot be thrown out in the normal garbage. If you do not want your placenta after taking it home you must bring it back to your doctor or midwife. They will throw it out properly.



## Regular Placenta Handling

- Once you birth the placenta your doctor or midwife will check it and put it in a plastic bag labeled with your hospital ID sticker
- If you would like to take your placenta home you must ask your doctor or midwife and they will talk with you about the risks of taking your placenta home.
- You must sign a "Release of Placenta" form to show you understand the risks and give it to your doctor or midwife.

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## If Your Placenta Needs Testing

Your doctor or midwife may suggest that your placenta be sent to the Anatomic Pathology Lab for testing. Lab tests of the placenta can give important facts that may be of great value for both this pregnancy and future pregnancies. Some health issues which may call for testing are:

- High blood pressure, high blood sugar, fever or infection
- There is low fluid (water) around your baby, you have twins or triplets, your baby is born early or very small, or your baby needs care in the nursery after it is born.

## When You Cannot Take Your Placenta Home

- Your placenta can not be taken home if it is tested in the Anatomic Pathology Lab.
- Your placenta can not be taken home if you have had positive blood tests for HIV, hepatitis or syphilis.



**Warning:** *When the placenta is tested in the Pathology Lab, there is a risk of germs from other people's placentas, blood, or other samples touching your placenta. The placenta may also touch chemicals (like formaldehyde) that are not safe and may cause cancer or genetic changes. **Your placenta cannot be taken home after testing in the pathology lab.** You may wish to discuss this with your doctor or midwife and choose to say "No" to testing of your placenta if you want to take your placenta home.*