

# What to do when taking your placenta home



The placenta is an essential and amazing organ that provides nutrients for your baby. After birth, some families like to take their placenta home to either bury or consume it. Please follow basic health and safety precautions outlined below.

## Safely storing your placenta

- Put on waterproof gloves (such as new dishwashing gloves) before handling the placenta.
- Place the placenta in two new and unused ziplock plastic bags and seal them.
- Put the sealed bags into a labelled plastic bucket (include name, date and time). The bucket will be provided by the hospital.
- Store the bucket in a fridge or freezer as soon as possible after birth. You may like to bring an esky or cooler bag to assist with this process. Keep it separate from food.
- Avoid contact with broken skin (cuts, burns or sores) and with your eyes, nose and mouth. Remove and dispose of the gloves after use.
- Wash your hands with warm water and soap straight away.

## Burying your placenta

- A placenta is considered human tissue.
- The law states the placenta must be buried at a significant depth, no less than 1m below the soil.

- This is to prevent it being scavenged by animals or becoming a potential source of infection to others.
- The placenta should not be buried near a creek or river, public land/park/reserves or in a location likely to contaminate drinking water.

- It is your responsibility to ask your local council if there are any guidelines in your area and to follow them.

## Consuming or encapsulating your placenta

- If you will be using your placenta for consumption, such as encapsulation (processing the placenta into capsules for consumption); this process needs to be arranged privately.
- Placentas for consumption should be treated just as you would fresh, raw meat and should be placed in a fridge as soon as possible. Do not store the placenta in a fridge where food is kept.
- Remaining placenta after encapsulation must be treated as human tissue and buried as noted above, or returned to the Birth Unit for appropriate disposal

You will be asked to sign an Authorisation of the release of Human Tissue Form. This confirms you understand this information before the placenta can be released to you. If your plans change and you decide not to keep your placenta, do not dispose of it in a domestic bin. You can return the

placenta in a bucket/container and plastic bag to the Birth Unit, and we will dispose of it correctly.

### What happens if my placenta requires to be tested?

- In some circumstances your placenta may need to be examined in the laboratory.
- This can often provide useful information about your pregnancy and birth.
- If the midwife/doctor caring for you recommends your placenta be sent to the laboratory for further testing, then you may not be able to take your placenta home.

#### Get in contact with your Birth Unit

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**Nepean Hospital**

Phone: (02) 4734 2373

**Blue Mountains ANZAC Memorial Hospital**

Phone: (02) 4784 6573

**Lithgow**

Phone: (02) 6350 2324 or 0437 255 207

**Hawkesbury**

Phone: (02) 4587 0714

## Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District

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