

One of our main goals at BC Women's is to provide safe care. This resource will help you and your family understand the risks and the procedures for handling your placenta if you choose to take it home.

## How do I arrange to take my placenta home?

Ask your healthcare provider about taking your placenta home. They will explain the risks. You must sign a "Release of Placenta" form to show you understand these risks. Your healthcare provider must have your signed release form before you can take your placenta home. Your placenta will be checked and put in a plastic bag labeled with your hospital ID sticker when you take it home.

## How can I take my placenta home safely?

Germs grow easily in a placenta. Germs can cause infection and make people sick. To lower the risk of infection to you and others, you should follow these steps when you take your placenta home:

1. Take the placenta home right away.
2. Keep it in a cool place (3°-7°C) that does not contain food; freeze the placenta if you are planning on keeping it for more than 2 days.
3. Wear gloves and cover cuts and scratches when touching the placenta.
4. Wash your hands with soap after handling the placenta. Even though you wore gloves, this is an extra precaution to keep you safe.
5. Bury the placenta no less than 1-meter-deep—to stop animals from eating it—and away from water sources to prevent contamination of the ground water.
6. Return it to your healthcare provider for proper disposal if you change your mind and decide you do not want it. Do not dispose of the placenta in a normal garbage container.

**It is not recommended that you or anyone else eat the placenta in any form.**

## What if my placenta needs testing?

Your healthcare provider may suggest your placenta be sent to the Anatomic Pathology Lab for testing. Lab tests of placenta can reveal important information that may be useful for this and future pregnancies. Your placenta may be sent for testing if you had:

- High blood pressure or high blood sugar
- Fever or infection at time of birth
- Low fluid (water) around your baby
- Twins or triplets

Your placenta may also be tested if your baby was born early, very small, or needed care in the NICU after they were born.

## Is there any reason I couldn't take my placenta home?

Your placenta cannot be taken home if:

- It was tested at the Anatomic Pathology Lab
- 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 placenta, 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. If you want to bring it home, you may wish to discuss this with your healthcare provider and choose to say **NO** to testing your placenta.