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## **Release and care of your placenta**

### **Gaining release of your placenta from the hospital**

It is important to include your plans for your placenta in your birth plan if you have one, and have your partner or doula remind your health care team about your wishes at the time of your baby's birth. If do not feel comfortable discussing their intentions for the placenta with their doctors. In this case, you may simply request your placenta and leave out the details. Placentophagia (consumption of the placenta) is deemed "a personal decision" by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada. Many families are now requesting their placentas: for burial purposes, or for encapsulation, and hospital staff is generally very accommodating of this request.

There are (rarely) situations when a mother's placenta may be taken to the pathology laboratory for testing, and this will render it unusable for remedies. If your placenta requires testing, you may ask if it would be acceptable for the lab to only take a small piece for testing (leaving the rest of the placenta in your care). If the reason for testing is due to infection, encapsulation and ingestion will not be possible, however we may be able to continue with remedy preparation in other situations- your health care team would need to be made aware of your plans for ingestion so they could advise on this. If the placenta will not be fit for consumption, keepsakes may still be possible.

### **Following are some examples of how you may wish to word your request in your birth plan.**

"We wish to take the placenta home. Please do not discard"

"We are planning to bury the placenta under a special tree, please do not discard."

"We are planning to encapsulate the placenta, please treat it with care. We have brought a small cooler to store the placenta on ice until we take it home. Thank you for your sensitivity to our wishes."

### **Care of your placenta after your birth**

It is important that your placenta be well cared for and stored before remedy preparation to ensure the safety and effectiveness of your remedies. Your placenta should be placed on ice or refrigerated after your birth; sooner is better, but definitely within 4-5 hours. A great way to do this is to bring a small cooler or insulated lunch bag to the hospital, along with 1 or 2 large sized ziplock bags. You can fill the ziplock bags with ice chips from the machine at the hospital, and this way the placenta can put on ice quickly. Ideally the preparation of your remedies would begin within 24-48 after your birth, however the placenta can be kept refrigerated for 5 days. If you are not planning to have me begin your remedy preparation within that time, it should be frozen as soon as possible after the birth. Freezing the placenta will reduce B-vitamins (as with all frozen foods), but other factors remain intact. To minimize freezer-burn, please double-bag your placenta in a freezer-grade ziplock bag, ensuring that you remove as much air as possible from the bag.

## **Transportation of your placenta**

My clients who live out outside of Truro usually either have a friend or family member deliver the placenta to me in Truro, or they courier the placenta to me Via Maritime Bus Courier Service, which is efficient and affordable (~\$15). Your placenta must be kept cool during transportation. If you or a loved one will be bringing the placenta to me in Truro, a small cooler or insulated lunch bag with an ice pack should be sufficient. If you are planning to have a courier service (like Acadian Lines) deliver your placenta, you must ensure that it is packed well and with enough ice to keep it cool for the duration of transport (including unexpected delays).

Most hospitals double-bag the placenta. If your placenta was placed in an ice cream type of bucket, you may want to place it in a large ziplock bag instead, to allow for a smaller parcel and to allow for better temperature control. To pack your placenta for courier, place it between several ice packs, and wrap well with 8-10 layers of newspaper or several dish towels. Double bag this bundle to contain any condensation as the ice packs melt. Depending on the length in transit, you can place this bundle in a cardboard box, or you may wish to place it in an insulated lunch box or cooler (which will be returned to you with your finished remedies). Your package should be clearly labelled as “perishable”, with my address and telephone number. You MUST contact me before sending your package by bus or courier so that I can plan to be home or at the bus station to receive it promptly.

## **Delivery of your Placenta Package**

For local clients, I will deliver your package to you at home or hospital, or they can be picked up at my home. For out-of-town clients, your package via Maritime Bus Courier Service (will be sent to your nearest depot for pickup) or Canada Post Expedited Parcel Service (comes to your door, takes 1-3 business days depending on location). I will have your remedies completed and on their way back to you within 24-48 hours of me receiving your placenta in most cases (holidays or family vacations may impact this, and will be discussed prior to your birth)

## **Pre-Birth Checklist**

- I have completed the Placenta Services Agreement electronic form at <http://www.newrootsbirth.ca/placenta-services-agreement> and submitted my deposit by EMT or cheque.
- I have included my request to take home my placenta in my birth plan and have mentioned this to my health care provider.
- I have packed 2 large freezer-strength ziplock bags, an insulated lunch bag or cooler, and Andrea’s phone number and address in my hospital bag.
- I have written a cheque for the remaining balance (to be included in the parcel with the placenta), or will be transferring this fee via email at the time of remedy preparation.
- I know I can contact Andrea at any time with questions or concerns!