



Important Health Information about Taking Home Your Placenta

The Texas Department of State Health Services wants to provide you with information about how to safely handle your placenta, if you choose to take it home after birth for personal use.

Blood-borne diseases: What you should know

- Diseases that are spread through the blood are known as blood-borne diseases, and the placenta contains blood. If the mother is infected, her placenta may be able to transmit blood-borne diseases to other people, including:
 - HIV, the virus that causes AIDS
 - Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C viruses, which can cause liver disease
- The placenta is exposed to other possibly infectious germs (including bacteria and viruses) in the birth canal and after delivery, especially if certain birth complications occur.
- Texas law requires that mothers be tested for certain infectious diseases. By law, you will not be allowed to take your placenta home with you if your test results show that you may have any of these diseases.

Handling the placenta: What you should know

- If you decide to take your placenta home with you after birth, it is important to handle it safely. The placenta will grow germs which means it must be handled with care, both in the hospital or birthing center and at your home.
 - Following the procedures of your hospital or birthing center, the placenta should be sealed in a container and labeled, then taken home as soon as possible after birth. If possible, keep it cool or refrigerated before taking it home. This will reduce but not eliminate or kill the germs.
 - The placenta contains your blood, and for the safety of others in the hospital or birthing center, keep the placenta completely sealed once it is packaged until you get home.
- When you take the placenta home, keep it refrigerated and sealed, and keep it away from food.
 - Wash your hands thoroughly both before and after touching the placenta.
- If you plan to consume the placenta in any way, be sure to handle it as you would raw meat and cook it thoroughly to avoid consuming germs that may have grown in the placenta since birth.
 - Wash cooking utensils, pots, and surfaces with warm soapy water after preparing the placenta.
 - Dispose of any unused portion of the placenta; check local regulations for disposal requirements.

Formalin: What you should know

- Depending on the procedures used at the hospital or birthing center where you are giving birth, it is possible that your placenta could be placed in a type of preservative liquid called formalin.
- Do not consume the placenta if formalin has been used to preserve it.
 - Formalin is unsafe to eat, drink, or inhale; consuming even a very small amount of formalin can cause damage to your stomach and other organs, and possibly death.
- Consult with the medical staff at your hospital or birthing center to ask if the placenta has come into contact with formalin.



Consent to Release Placenta from a Hospital or Birthing Center for Personal Use

Mother's name: _____
Name of mother's spouse: _____
(if mother is incapacitated or deceased)

Hospital or birthing center at which the mother gave birth on _____ date:
Facility name: _____
Address: _____

I, _____, request and acknowledge the release of the above named mother's placenta from the above named healthcare facility. I understand and acknowledge that:

- I have received educational material from the hospital or birthing center, provided by the Texas Department of State Health Services, regarding infectious disease and other risks associated with taking the placenta home;
- The above named hospital or birthing center is not responsible for the use, storage, or disposal of the placenta after delivery to the mother;
- No test can completely ensure the absence of infectious diseases in the placenta, and I accept any risk of infection to myself and others who handle this placenta; and
- I am taking the placenta for personal use only, and I cannot sell the placenta.

According to the Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 172, the mother or mother's spouse may not have the placenta released to them under certain circumstances, including: evidence of the mother's infection with certain diseases and the need to perform pathological examination of the placenta necessary according to a physician or healthcare facility.

Further detail regarding acceptable packaging, procedures, and policies to release the placenta are to be determined by the hospital or birthing center named above.

Mother or spouse name (print): _____
Mother or spouse signature: _____
Date: _____ Time: _____

Witness name (print): _____
Witness signature: _____
Date: _____ Time: _____