

## **Information on placenta encapsulation**

**Did you know there is a supplement you can take after birth that:**

- Is completely safe for your nursing baby?
- Can significantly decrease postpartum bleeding?
- Helps your uterus return to it's pre-pregnancy size within a couple of weeks?
- Enriches your milk and ensures an abundant supply?
- Smooths out the postpartum hormonal "crash"?
- Can prevent or reduce postpartum depression, naturally and safely?
- Can be taken for PMS, Menopause, or other hormonal imbalances?
- Was made by your body, and is therefore able to specifically address your hormonal and physical needs after giving birth?

**It's Your Placenta!**



**The placenta is composed of beneficial hormones, chemicals, iron, and proteins. These healing substances include:**

- **Estrogen, Progesterone, Testosterone:** Contributes to mammary gland development in preparation for lactation; stabilizes postpartum mood; regulates post-birth uterine cramping.
- **Prolactin:** Promotes lactation; increases milk supply; enhances the mothering instinct.
- **Oxytocin:** Decreases pain and increases bonding in mother and infant; counteracts the production of stress hormones such as Cortisol; greatly reduces postpartum bleeding; enhances the breastfeeding let-down reflex.
- **Placental Opioid-Enhancing Factor (POEF):** Stimulates the production of your body's natural opioids, including endorphins; reduces pain; increases well-being.

- **Thyroid Stimulating Hormone:** Regulates the thyroid gland; boosts energy.
- **Corticotropin Releasing Hormone (CRH):** Regulation of CRH helps prevent depression.
- **Cortisone:** Reduces inflammation and swelling; promotes healing.
- **Interferon:** Triggers the protective defenses of the immune system to fight infection.
- **Prostaglandins:** Regulates contractions in the uterus after birth; helps uterus return to its pre-pregnancy size.
- **Iron:** Replenishes maternal iron stores to combat anemia. Increases energy; decreases fatigue and depression.
- **Hemoglobin:** Oxygen-carrying molecule which provides a boost in energy.
- **Urokinase Inhibiting Factor and Factor XIII:** stops bleeding and enhances wound healing.
- **Immunoglobulin G (IgG):** Antibody molecules which support the immune system.
- **Human Placental Lactogen (hPL):** This hormone has lactogenic and growth-promoting properties; promotes mammary gland growth in preparation for lactation in the mother. It also regulates maternal glucose, protein, and fat levels.



If you are deciding you'd like to have your placenta encapsulated please let me know and I will put you in touch with placenta encapsulators in the area.

## Here is what you will need to do:

1. Book a placenta encapsulation service. Discuss whether the Encapsulation specialist will pick up/drop off placenta and capsules, or someone will bring the placenta to your Encapsulation Specialist.
2. You need a Placenta and Health Information Release Form for your hospital/Birthing Center. Bring it to your next prenatal visit and have your care provider fill out and sign the required information.
3. Usually there is a Placenta Encapsulation Processing Agreement for you to sign.
4. Make sure you get a Placenta Encapsulation Client Checklist to make sure you have all the necessary info, forms, and equipment.
5. If you are having a home birth or birth center birth, include two gallon-size Ziploc bags with your name and phone number written on one, in the bag or suitcase you plan to bring to your birth location.
6. Bring a small cooler with you to the birth location to keep your placenta cold until pick-up.
7. Specify in your birth plan that you will be keeping your placenta. You will have to sign a release form if you are birthing in hospital.
8. Inform your encapsulation specialist once you are in labor.
9. At a hospital birth, the nurses will store the placenta in a plastic container and a biohazard bag. Write your name and phone number on the container.
10. At a home or birth center birth, have the midwife double bag the placenta in two gallon-size ziploc freezer bags. Write your name and phone number on the bag.
11. Place the bagged placenta in the hospital or birth center fridge (or your own fridge for home birth) within one – two hours after birth.
12. If hospital will not store placenta in their fridge, you can place it in a cooler with ice and keep it cold.
13. The refrigerated placenta should be dropped off at your Encapsulation Specialist's house within 24 – 48 hours of the birth (or they will pick it up). Transport the placenta in a cooler with ice.
14. If you cannot get the placenta to your Encapsulation Specialist within 48 hours, it should be put in the freezer.
15. Usually the placenta capsules are ready within 48-72 hours.

## **Checklist of items to bring to hospital or birth center:**

- Signed and initialed Placenta and Health Release form, and Placenta Encapsulation Agreement.
- Placenta Encapsulation Checklist.
- Small cooler or container to keep placenta on ice.
- For birth center or home births: two gallon-sized Ziploc bags with your name and phone number written on them.
- Birth plan specifying that you are keeping placenta.

## **The encapsulation process should include:**

- Thorough sanitization of work space and all equipment.
- Carefully rinsing and cleaning the placenta of extra blood, clots, or any debris.
- Steaming the cleaned placenta for 20 minutes until it reaches the proper internal temperature.
- Slicing the steamed placenta thinly.
- Drying overnight in a dehydrator that is reserved specifically for placentas.
- Grinding the dehydrated strips into a fine powder.
- Filling capsules with powder, placing in containers and printing dosing instructions.
- In case the placenta is getting prepared in your home: Sanitization of all equipment and work space.

## There is more:

### Placenta Capsules



- This method usually produces around 100-175 capsules, depending on the size of your placenta.
- Capsules last many years when stored in the freezer. Take them for PMS, low milk supply, fertility challenges, and even menopause!
- Capsules should be taken with a glass of juice and a meal to help the powder settle and reconstitute in your stomach.

### Placenta Tincture



- Placenta tincture is usually an added bonus in that it can be used in addition to and long after the capsules are gone. By tincturing a small piece of the placenta in a high grade alcohol, you can prolong the benefits of your placental hormones. The tincture can be used in any time of trauma, transition, emotional distress and during menopause and ease your symptoms

- It is recommended you allow the placenta to steep for at least six – eight weeks before use. The tincture is very shelf-stable if kept in a cool dark place such as a cupboard, and will last for many, many years.
- Dosage is 7 – 10 drops of tincture in a full glass of juice. At this dilution, the alcohol has no intoxicating effects. It is less alcohol than cough medicine contains. If you prefer to reduce the alcohol even further, you can place the drops in a cup of boiling tea, “burning” off the alcohol, then cooling before ingesting.

### Placenta Salve



- Your own superfine placenta powder is infused into a high quality salve base, with or without your choice of essential oils.
- Placenta has long been used in skincare for its healing and restorative properties. There are a number of expensive anti-aging lotions and creams containing “sheep placenta extract” as the secret ingredient. Your own placenta is much more potent and completely safe to use topically when properly prepared.
- Placenta salve can be used for: Cesarean and other and surgical scars (wait until wounds have closed); Perineal tears (wait until stitches dissolve); Diaper rash; As a general healing and skin-care salve



## FAQ about encapsulation:

**Q:** Consuming the placenta seems so unappetizing. If it was designed to be consumed by the mother, wouldn't it seem more appealing, or at least be more instinctual or intuitive?

**A:** In our culture, we do not routinely consume organ meats. Organs such as the liver, the heart, and the pancreas are considered delicacies in many other cultures because of the high nutritive value of organ meat. Americans are typically repulsed by the thought of consuming any type of organ meat, but it is as you speculated, a product of our cultural upbringing. Many things about birth in our country are disrespected and misunderstood. The placenta is treated as medical waste in American birth rooms. In other parts of the world, the placenta is revered and would never be treated with disrespect. It is one of the most nutrient rich organs with many healing and restorative benefits. The placenta can be ingested, buried, or wrapped and left attached to the baby until it naturally sloughs off. For thousands of years, midwives would cut off a piece of the placenta and give it to a hemorrhaging mother to stop the bleeding and save her life. (The hormones in the placenta caused the uterus to contract and stop the mother from bleeding out in minutes.) Many homebirth midwives still use this method today.

**Q:** I understand that hormones can be transferred through food such as frozen, treated, or cooked animal products (meat, milk, etc.) Have you ever found anything about the effect of the dehydration process on hormones?

**A:** Dehydration is a process that removes water from the cells, but leaves everything else including minerals, hormones, proteins etc. behind.

**Q:** It seems the placenta is made from the baby's genetic matter (not the mother's) since it grows from the blastocyst. So, in actuality, the mother is ingesting someone else's hormones. Does that make a difference? (However, I suppose the iron and other nutrients found in the placenta are taken from the mother's stores, so I could see it helping to replenish the depletion there.)

**A:** First of all, remember that the baby itself is made from the DNA, cells, and proteins from the mother's body. Think of the placenta as a sponge that leaches protein, salt, iron, blood, serotonin, melatonin, oxytocin, and essentially the entire hormonal cocktail from the mother's body. The placenta is also an endocrine organ, meaning that it produces its own hormones. Ingesting the placenta restores all of this back to you. According to [this medical study](#), ingestion of the placenta produces a natural opioid-analgesia enhancement, essentially acting to increase the mother's endogenous pain-killers.

**Q:** Can I have my placenta encapsulated if I had a c-section, epidural, or pitocin during labor?

**A:** Yes, Yes, and Yes! These interventions have no noticeable effect on your placenta capsules. Epidural anesthesia and pitocin break down very quickly after entering the placenta. Make sure you specify clearly in your birth plan that you will be keeping the placenta, and that it needs to

be refrigerated as soon as possible after the birth. Especially after a c-section, you will need to be vigilant about making sure your placenta is treated properly.

**Q:** Is it safe to have my placenta encapsulated if I tested positive for Group B Strep (GBS)?

**A:** Yes. Group B strep is a common bacterium that does not normally pose health risks to the mother. All bacteria in the placenta is killed during the steaming process. Rarely, Group B strep can lead to uterine infection. If you developed a uterine infection or fever during your labor, your placenta would not be considered useful in healing, and would likely be taken to the pathology lab for testing, but otherwise, Group B strep is not contraindicated in placenta remedy preparation.

**Q:** Can I encapsulate my placenta if my baby passed meconium before birth?

**A:** Yes. Meconium is sterile, it does not contain fecal bacteria that normal stool does. Meconium is dangerous for the infant to inhale, but is otherwise harmless. Additionally, your placenta is thoroughly washed before encapsulation preparation.

**Q:** Can I still have my placenta encapsulated if I was diagnosed with pre-eclampsia?

**A:** Placenta encapsulation is not contraindicated for moms with Pre-eclampsia. Many women who've had pre-eclampsia have very successfully used Placenta Pills. No one fully understands pre-e or exactly how to prevent it, and although the placenta does seem to play a part, it is not usually unfit for consumption. After the birth, your placenta will be examined for irregularities and problems. Most of the time, the placenta is completely fine and you should have no problem having it released for encapsulation. If your care provider diagnoses a problem or infection in the placenta, it will be sent to pathology and you won't be able to take it home.

**Q:** Will the Hospital release my placenta?

**A:** Most hospitals are fairly easy to work with when it comes to having the placenta released, however you will need to let them know before the birth that you are keeping your placenta. A birth plan is the best way to do this. After delivery, you will have to sign a release form or waiver. Once the placenta has been inspected and determined healthy, you can ask the nurses to double bag it in Ziploc bags brought from home and place it in the hospital refrigerator. If they will not bag the placenta, it is ok to store it in the hospital's preferred container. If you have any of the following diseases, the hospital will not release your placenta: HIV, Gonorrhea, Syphilis, Chlamydia, Hep B or C.

**Q:** What if the doctor wants to take my placenta to pathology?

**A:** If the placenta needs to be taken to pathology ask if they can cut a small piece to examine instead of taking the whole placenta. If they insist on taking the whole placenta, you will not be able to have your placenta encapsulated.



Q: When is the placenta prepared?

A: Ideally, the placenta preparation should take place as soon as possible after the birth, within the first 48 – 72 hours. Directly after the birth, the placenta should be placed in an enclosed container (the hospital will put it in a plastic container or Ziploc bags), and then in the refrigerator until the encapsulator gets it. It can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 48 hours. If you know ahead of time that it will not be prepared within that time frame, it is best to place it straight into the freezer.

Q: Can I have my placenta encapsulated if my baby was premature?

A: Yes, unless the doctor decides to take your whole placenta to pathology. Moms of preemies need all the help they can get bringing in their milk, healing quickly, and balancing postpartum mood. If your doctor wants to culture the placenta, you can often negotiate to have just a piece of the placenta taken to pathology so you can encapsulate the rest.

Q: I have a placenta stored in my freezer from a previous birth. Is it safe to have it encapsulated?

A: That depends on several factors: Was the placenta frozen properly? (Frozen within 48 hours of the birth, no signs of frostbite, has been kept frozen i.e. not thawed and re-frozen) If frozen properly, you can have it encapsulated up to one year after the birth.

Q: I have twins and will deliver two placentas. Can I have both of them encapsulated?

A: In the case of twins, the placentas together will be processed together.

Q: I was told my placenta was “abnormal”. How do I know if it is safe to ingest?

A: Your placenta is as unique as your fingerprints. No two placentas are the same, as each one is specifically made by and for your baby and your body. Sometimes a placenta can be very unique; an unusual shape or size, extra lobes, etc. But “unique” does not mean “unhealthy”. The only situations in which a placenta wouldn’t be safe to consume is if you developed an infection during labor (being GBS positive does NOT automatically mean you have an infection), if the placenta was taken to pathology, if it was not refrigerated properly after the birth, or if you have HIV, Gonorrhea, Syphilis, Chlamydia, Hep B or C. Calcification of the placenta is normal and does not preclude encapsulation.

Q: How many capsules should I be taking?

A: You will want to self-regulate your dosage based on how you are feeling on any given day. The basic guidelines are as follows. **Days 1 – 3 after receiving your placenta:** Take two capsules three times per day (six total), with meals. **Days 4 – 14:** Take two capsules twice per day (four total), with meals. **Days 14 and beyond:** Take two capsules daily with a meal until you run out, or until you don’t feel you need them anymore. You can save any remaining capsules for low milk supply, PMS, depression, mood-swings, and even menopause. However, if six capsules feel like too many for you, or if two doesn’t feel like enough, adjust your dosage accordingly.

Q: How do I store my Placenta Capsules?

A: You should store your capsules in an airtight container in the freezer. If you move, make sure to keep your capsules cool and dry until you can get them back in the freezer. Stored properly, your capsules will last many years.

Q: On average, how many capsules can I expect to receive?

A: That depends on the size of the placenta. A small placenta will yield around 90 – 100 capsules. A very large placenta can produce up to 175 or even more. On average you can expect around 125 – 150 capsules. Generally speaking, big babies have big placentas and small babies have small placentas.

Q: What do you do with the amniotic sac and the umbilical cord?

A: The amniotic sack is cleaned and usually steamed along with the placenta.

Q: What if I have a disease such as HIV, Gonorrhea, Syphilis, Chlamydia or Hepatitis B, or C?

A: For your safety and the safety of others, it is not possible to process your placenta if you have any of the above diseases. If you have any of these diseases the hospital will not release your placenta to you.

Contact [stephanie@thenewyorkdoula.com](mailto:stephanie@thenewyorkdoula.com) to find a placenta encapsulator in your area!