



## CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE

# Placenta being taken home: Safe handling

This document should be read in conjunction with the [Disclaimer](#)

**This guideline must be read in conjunction with the Department of Health WA:**

- Mandatory Policy 0129/20: [Release of Human Tissue and Explanted Medical Devices Policy](#) and
- [Guideline for the Release of a Human Fetus or Placenta](#)
- Patient Information Sheet and Consent Form - [Authorisation and Release of a Human Fetus or Placenta](#)

### **KEMH specific information**

1. Check if placenta is not to be released:
  - See [Indications for Pathological Examination of a Placenta](#) guideline
  - See 'Exclusion Criteria' in section 3.3 in [MP 0129/20](#)
2. Requests to release a placenta should be discussed with the midwife, obstetrician and operating room staff prior to the birth or operative procedure when possible.
3. The placenta should be taken home on the day of birth. Short term storage **is not** available at KEMH.
4. Where no request to remove the placenta from the hospital is received, the placenta will be disposed of as per PSS processes, unless it is sent for formal pathological examination in which case it will be retained as per PathWest protocols.
5. There is currently inadequate data to support claims that placentophagy (ingestion of the placenta) has any health benefits, and due to potential infectious risks<sup>1</sup>, women are discouraged from placental consumption.<sup>2</sup>

## References

1. Buser GL, Mató S, Zhang AY, Metcalf BJ, Beall B, Thomas AR. Notes from the field: Late-onset infant group b streptococcus infection associated with maternal consumption of capsules containing dehydrated placenta. **MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep** 2017;66:677-8. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6625a4.htm>
2. Farr A, Chervenak F, McCullough L, Baergen R, Grünebaum A. Human placentophagy: A review. **American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology**. 2018;218(4):401.e1-11.

## Related policies, procedures and guidelines

Department of Health Western Australia:

- MP 0129/20: [Release of Human Tissue and Explanted Medical Devices Policy](#)
- [Guideline for the Release of a Human Fetus or Placenta](#)

## Related WNHS policies, procedures and guidelines

- KEMH Clinical Guideline: Obstetrics & Gynaecology: [Labour: Indications for Pathological Examination of a Placenta](#)

## Useful resources (including related forms)

- Department of Health Western Australia: [Patient Information Sheet and Consent Form - Authorisation and Release of a Human Fetus or Placenta](#)

Keywords:	placenta, taking the placenta home, handling of placenta, maternal request for placenta, release of human tissue, MR 355.10		
Document owner:	Obstetrics & Gynaecology Directorate (OGD)		
Author / Reviewer:	O&G Evidence Based Clinical Guidelines		
Date first issued:	01/2004		
Reviewed dates: (since July 2017)	; 04/07/17; April 2020	Next review date:	April 2023
Endorsed by:	Obstetrics & Gynaecology Directorate Management Committee [OOS by Medical and Midwifery Co-Directors]	Date:	28/04/2020
NSQHS Standards (v2) applicable:	1  Governance, 2  Partnering Consumers, 3  Preventing and Controlling Infection, 5  Comprehensive Care, 6  Communicating (incl		
<b>Printed or personally saved electronic copies of this document are considered uncontrolled. Access the current version from the WNHS website.</b>			

© North Metropolitan Health Service 2020

[www.nmhs.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.nmhs.health.wa.gov.au)