

## Appendix 2 – Information for Women: Guidance on the storage and disposal (By Burial) of placenta

This information is intended to guide you through how to safely transport and/or dispose of your placenta if you have decided to take it home with you or keep it at home (following birthing at home).

There are some standard precautions you should be aware of for your health and safety and that of others in your home. It is also important that you are aware of how to dispose of your placenta in accordance with laws designed to protect public health, or what you should do if you decide to bury it.

A placenta provides a perfect environment for micro-organisms to grow. In order to reduce the risk of spreading infections, the following steps should be followed:

1. The placenta should be sealed in a plastic bag, this should then be sealed in a second plastic bag. It should then be placed into a leak-proof, sealed container to transport it in. You will need to bring the container to hospital with you for the birth. Once sealed, the container should not be opened until you arrive home.
2. Placenta will deteriorate quickly so needs to be taken home as soon as possible after the birth and stored in a cool place. It should be stored in a fridge that does not contain any food and for no more than 48 – 72 hours before it is buried or disposed of.
3. It is important to remove the placenta from the plastic sealable container and plastic bag prior to burial.
4. When handling the placenta, we recommend that you wear protective gloves and wash your hands well afterwards.
5. The placenta must be buried on private property (your own garden for example) and not in public places such as parks or cemeteries. You cannot dispose of your placenta in domestic or council refuse.
6. If you decide to bury your placenta, it is your responsibility to ask your local council if there are any applicable guidelines and to follow them. We suggest that you bury your placenta at a depth of no less than one meter deep to prevent it being dug up by animals and becoming a potential source of infection.
7. The place where the placenta is buried should be marked in some way so that it is not accidentally disturbed at a later date
8. If you change your mind and decide that you do not want to bury your placenta, it is then your responsibility to contact your local council and arrange for your placenta to be disposed of into an appropriate clinical waste system
9. We will ask you to sign the “*Release of human tissue (placenta and umbilical cord only)*” form.

10. Should it be your intention to take the placenta overseas for burial please understand that it is your responsibility to ensure that you have informed the airline of your intention to export human tissue.
  
11. The placenta should be preferably be given to the mother. However, should you be remaining in hospital for several days, the partner or close relative may take responsibility for the removal of the placenta.

**Please Note:** if the woman has an infection or is a carrier of a blood borne infection, the placenta must be retained by the Health Board for disposal by incineration.