



**Royal Berkshire**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# My placenta and umbilical cord following birth

Information for women and  
birthing people

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**This leaflet is designed for any woman or birthing person to explain options for placenta testing and disposal following birth.**

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## **What will happen to my placenta?**

We will routinely store your placenta and umbilical cord for 48 hours after birth, so that in the event that your baby becomes unwell, we can send your placenta for testing. Your midwife will ask for your consent for this. If you do not want your placenta to be stored and tested, please inform the midwife caring for you during labour or shortly after birth. We can offer routine hospital disposal or you can choose to take your placenta home.

If you choose to take your placenta home, your midwife will provide you with further information. Your placenta is regarded as human tissue in the eyes of the law, which means it must be incinerated (burnt) at a high temperature or buried at least 1 metre below ground. **It must not be placed in domestic or council waste bins.**

## **Why might my placenta need to be tested?**

It might help the clinical team to make decisions about your and / or your baby's care. Please note that not all circumstances where a baby becomes unwell will require placental testing to help with care decisions. If your baby does become unwell and you are unsure whether placental testing will be offered, please speak with a midwife about this.

After 48 hours, if your baby is well, we will routinely dispose of your placenta (it will be bagged as clinical waste and incinerated).

It is important to note that if your placenta is not stored in monitored conditions by the hospital for 48 hours after the birth – if you take it home for instance, if your baby then becomes unwell, subsequent testing will not be possible.

## Can I take my placenta home after testing?

Your placenta will be placed into a hazardous preservation chemical which will impact your choices for disposal if you choose to take your placenta home after testing. It is advised that you seek advice from local environmental health officers for the lawful disposal of such tissue.

You would not be able to store or eat any of your placenta after it has been preserved in the chemical, as it is dangerous.

If you wish to take your placenta home, your midwife will ask you to sign a consent form, which provides more information for disposal once released to you.

## What if I am unsure about what to do?

Please feel free to ask questions if you wish, and discuss it with your partner or friends and family. Whatever choice you make, it will not affect your care or treatment.

Please confirm your decision with the midwife caring for you during labour, or shortly after birth.

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

RBFT Bereavement Midwifery Team, March 2025

Next review due: March 2027