

How many capsules will I get?

The number of capsules will depend on the size and density of your placenta, as well as the preparation method you choose.

In general, the placenta weighs about 1/6th the weight of the baby. Bigger babies tend to come with bigger placentas, littler babies tend to come with littler placentas. The average number of capsules for Traditional style preparation is about 150, although I've had as few as 100 and as many as 225. The average number of capsules for Raw style preparation is about 1/5 to 1/4 more, as placentas shrink considerably when steamed.

How many capsules do I take each day?

You will receive dosage guidelines with your capsules. They are guidelines, not strict instructions. Your placenta is not a standardized factory product. Each one will have a different proportion of hormones and nutrients, made just for you. You can take more or fewer capsules depending on how you are feeling.

A good starting place is two capsules, three times a day. If you are feeling agitated or having trouble sleeping you can reduce your dosage to one, three times a day, and/or skip the last dose of the day. After two weeks, if you are doing well and your bleeding has almost stopped, you may wish to cut back to one, three times a day so that your capsules last longer and you taper gradually off of the hormones. Most people will have best results by continuing to take their capsules until they are gone. Placenta capsules help your body transition from pregnant to not pregnant.

How do I choose between Raw and Traditional?

The Traditional method of placenta encapsulation is based in the principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Your placenta is gently steamed with lemon, ginger and hot peppers, and other herbs if needed, then dried and encapsulated. The herbs are not included in the capsules themselves, just pure placenta. This method is believed to be warming and replenishing to the postpartum body and circulatory system. Some clients say it is more supportive of mood.

The Raw method of placenta encapsulation is simply that. Your placenta is prepared for dehydration from the raw state. Your placenta must be very fresh. It is dehydrated at a high temperature to kill off any harmful bacteria that may be present, but is otherwise unprocessed. This method is believed to better preserve hormones and nutrients. Some clients say it provides more of an energy boost. The Raw method makes about 20-25% more capsules, but the dehydration stage takes significantly longer.

Storage and Transportation

At home, your placenta can go into any handy lidded container. It's safe to leave it out at room temperature for about two hours - after that it should be kept cool. Please ask your midwives to put it in the fridge, not the freezer. If the preparation is being done in my home, it is helpful to put it in a container that will not leak during transport. You can store your placenta in anything you would keep food in. You can use a couple of large, freezer strength ziplock bags, a tupperware-type container or a glass casserole with a lid. A placenta is about the size of a salad plate and about 2-3cm thick, but it squishes. Please do not rinse your placenta or package it with absorbent material. Do not allow ice or water to come into direct contact with it.

At the hospital, they may supply you with a white plastic placenta bucket, but it's a good idea to bring your own packaging to be on the safe side. It's safe to leave it out at room temperature for about two hours - after that it should be kept cool. You can store your placenta in anything you would keep food in. You can use a couple of large, freezer strength ziplock bags, a tupperware-type container or a glass casserole with a lid. A placenta is about the size of a salad plate and about 2-3cm thick, but it squishes. Please do not rinse your placenta or wrap it with absorbent material. Do not allow ice or water to come into direct contact with it. If it will be a while before it sees a refrigerator you can put ice packs around your packaged placenta. You can fill ziplocks or hospital gloves with ice from the ice machine to make cold packs.

Hospital Release

Most hospitals are willing to release placentas. Some will have you sign a release form, but not all. (Please let me know if you have different, more recent information.) Your doctor may not know the hospital's policy, and permission from your doctor is not enough. You can call Labour and Delivery and ask to speak to the Nurse Manager to find out your hospital's current policies. Midwives will usually release your placenta to you directly to take home after the birth. If your placenta must go into hospital storage, ideally it should go into a refrigerator, not a freezer.

If your hospital has a policy of mandatory Pathology hold, it is very important that you ensure your placenta will not be treated with alcohol or other chemicals, that it is kept refrigerated, and that it does not get accidentally discarded after the hold period. I will send you stickers which can be placed on your container. You may wish to place one sticker over the edge of the container so that we can tell if the container has been opened.

Sanitation and Safety

Safety is very important for your health, for the health of the family who comes after you, and for me and my family.

I have OHS Canada-compliant training in the control of blood borne pathogens in the workplace, and Toronto Public Health Food Handler certification. All of my equipment is used exclusively for placenta preparation. I have a separate area of my home where I do preparation, and I also offer the choice of preparation in your home. All of my equipment is sanitized to Health Canada standards for semi-critical medical equipment.

Preparation in your home

Preparation at your home will take place over two days. The first day is for preparing the placenta and getting it into the dehydrator. The second day is for grinding and encapsulating the dehydrated placenta.

I need unrestricted access to your kitchen for 2-3 hours the first day, and 1.5-2 hours the second day. I will need access to a sink, and stove, and about 2-3' of counter space. I will also need a place to plug in the dehydrator overnight – it doesn't have to be in the kitchen. You do not need to provide anything. I will bring everything I need with me. I will clean and move things around if I need to; it is best if the counter area I'm using is completely clear. I will do my best to leave your kitchen cleaner than I found it when I go. Please do not allow dogs or toddlers into the kitchen area where I will be working. You and your family are welcome to observe or take pictures of the process if you like. Small children are welcome to watch if an adult supervises them.