

Placenta Consumption

What is placenta consumption?

Placenta consumption is the practice of either eating the placenta after childbirth or swallowing capsules containing dried placenta tissue. Although the practice is rare, it is growing in popularity.

Why do people choose to consume the placenta?

Most people who choose to consume placenta tissue claim certain physical and mental health benefits. These might include less postpartum depression, better mood, more energy, and more breastmilk. However, these claims are not supported by medical research.

What do I need to do next?

- 1 Review the information in this handout, especially what is known from medical research about the risks and benefits of placenta consumption.
- 2 Write down any questions you have for your healthcare provider on the back of this handout.
- 3 Discuss your questions with your healthcare provider and make a shared decision based on what is best for your situation.

Talking with your healthcare provider about placenta consumption

The table below lists the information about the known benefits, risks, and alternatives of placenta consumption. The conversation you have with your healthcare provider is the most important part of learning about these risks and benefits. Be sure to ask questions. It's important to have all your questions answered before you decide to consume placenta tissue.

Possible benefits	Risks and possible complications	Alternatives
There are no known health benefits for people who consume placenta tissue.	Placentas may contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germs that can either make you sick or transfer to your breastmilk and make your baby very sick. Germs can get on the placenta during a bowel movement or when the placenta is placed into a bag and container for you to transport home. • Harmful chemicals that can hurt you and your baby. The placenta filters certain chemicals from the environment to protect a developing baby. Harmful chemicals like cadmium, mercury, and lead have all been found in placenta tissue tested after childbirth. These chemicals can be harmful even at low levels. 	To treat a health concern related to your recovery, postpartum depression or other mood problems, fatigue (tiredness), or breastmilk supply, follow standard medical treatments.

