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Placenta Encapsulation



The placenta is the organ that surrounds the fetus in the womb and allows for the exchange of nutrients, blood,

and waste with the mother. It is expelled from the uterus after the birth of the child. The custom of consuming the placenta, often done as **placental encapsulation**, is centuries old, practiced most often in Chinese medicine. It is a controversial tradition that has been gaining traction in the United States for several decades.

The few scientific studies conducted on placental encapsulation have not conclusively supported the effects of this practice, nor have they completely dispelled the possibility of benefits from ingesting the placenta. However, it should be noted by expectant mothers that the majority of the information we have regarding placental encapsulation comes almost entirely from anecdotes of women who have tried it.



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What Is Placenta Encapsulation?

Placental encapsulation is the practice of ingesting the placenta after it has been steamed, dehydrated, ground, and placed into pills. Traditionally, this is taken by the mother and is believed to impart numerous health benefits. It is frequently taken shortly after giving birth, during a woman's menstrual period, or during menopause with the belief that it helps counter some of the symptoms of menopause.

What Are The Proposed Benefits Of Placental Encapsulation?

There is little scientific research available regarding placental encapsulation and consumption and its benefits. Tradition and holistic medical customs embrace a number of potential advantages which come from ingesting the placenta.

Among these possible benefits are:

- Increased release of the hormone oxytocin, which helps the uterus return to normal size and encourages bonding with the infant
- Increase in CRH, a stress-reducing hormone
- Decrease in [post-partum depression](http://americanpregnancy.org/first-year-of-life/forms-of-)
(<http://americanpregnancy.org/first-year-of-life/forms-of->

[postpartum-depression/](#)) levels

- Restoration of iron levels in the blood
- Increase in milk production

Is Placental Encapsulation Safe?

Placental encapsulation appears to carry no inherent risk if ingested solely by the mother. Some mothers have reported experiencing negative symptoms such as [dizziness](#)

(<http://americanpregnancy.org/pregnancy-health/dizziness-during-pregnancy/>) or jitteriness after taking the pills. Again, most of the information regarding this practice is amassed from anecdotes, and not from research. In addition, if taken by other family members or friends, one must be aware of the possibility of passing along blood-borne diseases.

Also, if the placenta needs to be stored for any period of time, it must be kept refrigerated like any other meat product.

How Do I Do Placenta Encapsulation?

Placenta encapsulation specialists can be found across the country. These individuals may have completed a variety of possible training courses, but be aware there are no laws governing this practice. There are, however, laws in some states which forbid the parents from removing the placenta from the hospital.

If you are considering placental encapsulation, it is important to research the techniques used by your chosen facility to ensure the placenta is being handled safely. In addition to encapsulation, some mothers opt to consume the placenta by cooking it into foods,

such as pizza or lasagna. Regardless of the method of ingestion, it is imperative to treat the placenta as a meat product and make sure it is stored correctly and cooked thoroughly.

The Bottom Line on Placenta Encapsulation

There is little research available to either support or oppose the tradition of placental encapsulation. There are a number of proposed benefits of the custom, and limited risks if the placenta is stored correctly and ingested only by the mother.

If you feel that placental encapsulation is right for you, be sure to contact your healthcare provider to receive more information on the proper procedure for it. It is also important to be aware of any laws in your state that make it illegal to remove the placenta from the hospital.

