

A Guide to Pregnancy Remains

What are pregnancy remains?

Pregnancy remains can also be medically referred to as products of conception (POC). These remains can include fetal tissue, and placental tissue. Depending on your gestational age (how far along you were in your pregnancy) this tissue may appear as a wet cotton ball or like a developing fetus.

Why would someone bring home pregnancy remains?

There are a variety of ways that folks can facilitate their own healing such as through writing letters (to self or to the pregnancy), speaking with someone about their emotions, and through rituals or ceremonies. Some individuals may wish to take home their tissue in order to have a type of ceremony/closure ritual or burial as a way to grieve, and to have resolution. Rituals do not have to be religious, although they may be. Some examples of commemorating this loss can be reviewed here: <https://pailnetwork.sunnybrook.ca/resources/commemorating-pregnancy-infant-loss/>.

You have decided to take home my pregnancy remains. Now what?

Our team will provide you with a closed, leak-proof private container and transport bag to bring home. You are welcome to use the container and bag to perform a ceremony or burial if you wish. Prior to performing any commemoration, it is advised to store pregnancy remains in a freezer or cooler of some sort that is not also used to store food. The pregnancy remains, such as placenta, cannot be ingested. Clients have used ice packs and coolers, or a mini fridge for these reasons. When handling remains, it is strongly advised to use waterproof gloves and to wash your hands with soap and water after removing any gloves.

For burial or cremation purposes, the pregnancy remains must be buried approximately 3 feet into the ground or can be scattered on your own private property. If you wish to have a formal cremation or burial service, clients must coordinate that on their own accord with a funeral home. A service we know to be abortion friendly is After Care Cremation and Burial Service and more information about them can be found here: <https://www.aftercare.org/>.

Taking care of your wellbeing:

There are no right or wrong ways to feel after an abortion. All emotions and spectrums of processing are valid. It is okay to take all the time you need. If you feel you would like some additional support in your emotional and spiritual healing please feel free to contact the clinic to book a free counselling appointment. If you would prefer to process your emotions independently there is a helpful guide entitled "Abortion Resolution Workbook: A Guide for those Seeking Emotional and Spiritual Resolution" which can be accessed at this link: <https://www.pregnancyoptions.info/abortion-resolution-workbook>.

You might find self care practices such as rest, having a bath, reading, going for walks, and having a comforting meal might all be helpful through this time. For more self care strategies, you are welcome to visit: <https://choiceinhealth.ca/recovery>. We are here for you.