

Kaitiaki pēpi

Te whare tangata and protecting pēpi

Te whare tangata (the womb) is where pēpi lives and grows during hapūtanga – this is their first home.

Hapūtanga is important for Māori because it represents whakapapa and is a sign of growth in whānau, hapū and iwi. Tikanga are often put in place by hapū, and followed through generations of whānau, to ensure that māmā and the unborn pēpi are well taken care of, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

When hapū, you are considered to be more open to the spiritual elements, so caution is taken in events on the marae, at the urupā and on other formal occasions. Ask your whānau about their beliefs if you are unsure.

Eat good kai and rongoā that will support everyone's health.



Te pito

Te pito (the umbilical cord) is how pēpi gets what they need to grow. This is the tube that feeds pēpi, so what māmā eats, drinks and inhales comes to pēpi through the pito.

When pēpi is born the pito is cut and tied until it dries and drops off. Some whānau have special places to bury it.

Te whenua

Te whenua is the afterbirth or placenta. When you are hapū the whenua transfers kai and oxygen from māmā to pēpi. It also transfers all the paru or waste pēpi produces for māmā to get rid of.

When pēpi is born the whenua also comes out. Like the pito it is often buried. Think about what you would like to do with your whenua.