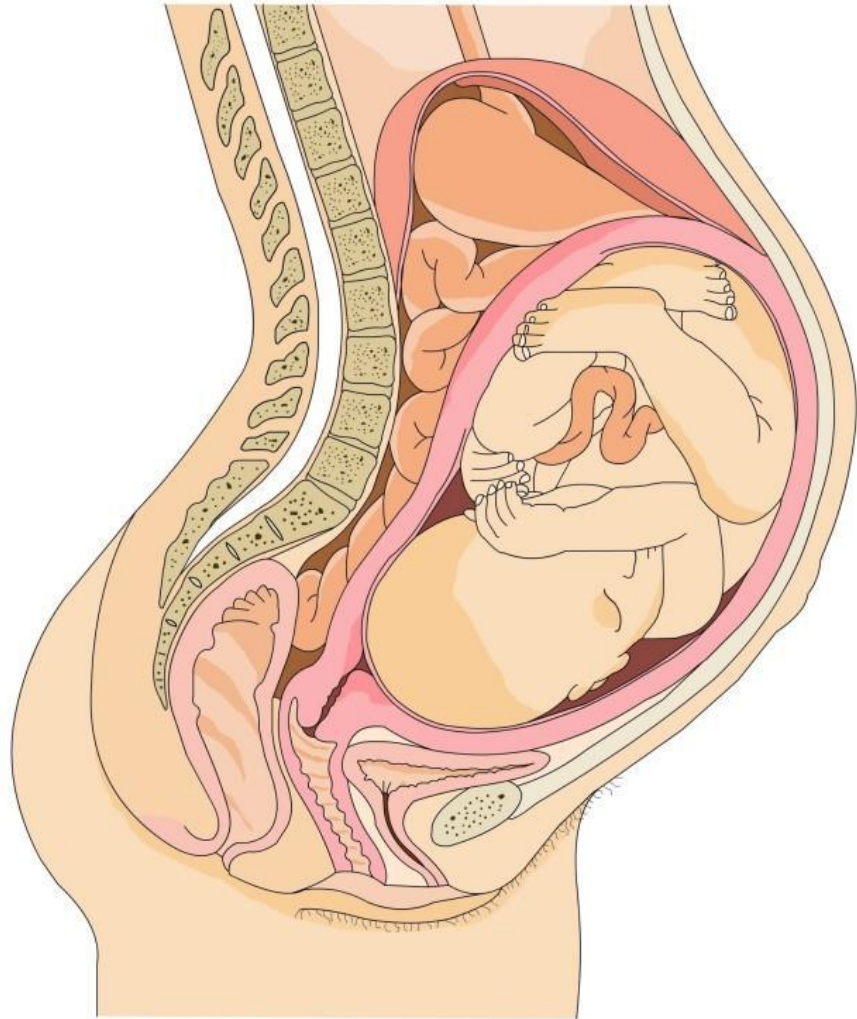


What is a Midwife







What is a midwife?

A midwife is a primary health care provider who is an expert in normal pregnancy, labour, birth and newborn care. Midwives provide care from early pregnancy to six weeks after the birth of your baby.

How much does it cost to have a midwife?

Women do not have to pay out of pocket for a midwife as midwives are covered by the Ministry of Health and Long Term care. Even women without OHIP coverage have their midwifery services paid for through this program (however, this does not include fees for lab testing, ultrasound, consultants or some hospital fees as these are funded through OHIP)

Why should I choose a midwife?

Midwifery care is an excellent choice for women experiencing uncomplicated, healthy pregnancies. Under midwifery care you will get to know a small group of midwives throughout your pregnancy. There is an excellent chance that a midwife known to you will attend your labour and birth. Midwives are on-call and available to their clients 24/7.

Midwifery care is based on three important philosophies:

- Informed Choice
- Continuity of Care
- Choice of Birth Place

Informed choice involves giving women the information and research they need to make choices about what's right for them and their families during pregnancy.

Continuity of Care is the philosophy that midwives known to you provide all the care you need throughout pregnancy, labour, birth and postpartum.

Choice of Birth Place is the idea that women should be able to choose where they give birth. Midwives are regulated to attend births at home, in hospitals and in birth centres. There are hopes that more birth centres will be opening across the province. Midwives support women in their choice of where to give birth.

Do I need to see a doctor and a midwife while I'm pregnant?

No. You only need to see one health care provider during your pregnancy.

What's the difference between a midwife and a doula?

A midwife is a healthcare professional. A doula is a non-medical trained expert who helps support women physically and emotionally during labour, birth and postpartum. Doula care is not covered by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, and thus must be paid for out of pocket. Doulas are usually very skilled at labour support and complement midwifery care nicely. Speak with your midwife if you are interested in having a doula attend your birth.

Myths & Facts

Myth: You have to pay for a midwife

Fact: Any resident of Ontario is eligible to receive midwifery care for free. Midwives are covered by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. Even if you do not have OHIP you can still receive midwifery care for free.

Myth: Midwives and doulas are the same thing

Fact: Midwives and doulas are not the same. Midwives are healthcare professionals, while doulas are non-medical people who can provide labour and postpartum support.

Myth: If I have a midwife I have to have my baby at home

Fact: Midwives attend births in a variety of settings including in hospital, at home and birth centers. Almost 80% of all midwife attended births take place in the hospital. About one in four women who have midwives will plan to have their babies at home.

Myth: If I have a midwife I can't get an epidural

Fact: You can absolutely get an epidural if you are in midwifery care. Depending on what hospital your midwife has privileges at, your care may be transferred to an obstetrician if you choose to get an epidural. Usually care is transferred back after your baby is delivered and the epidural wears off.

Myth: Midwives can't prescribe drugs

Fact: Midwives can prescribe almost all of the drugs you may need during your pregnancy.

Myth: I will need to see both a doctor and a midwife

Fact: Midwives are primary health care providers, so are doctors. That means you only see one or the other during your whole pregnancy.

Myth: My baby will need a pediatrician once it's born

Fact: Midwives care for both you and your baby for six weeks after you deliver. After six weeks you and your baby can go see a family doctor. If you do not have a family doctor your midwife can help you find one.

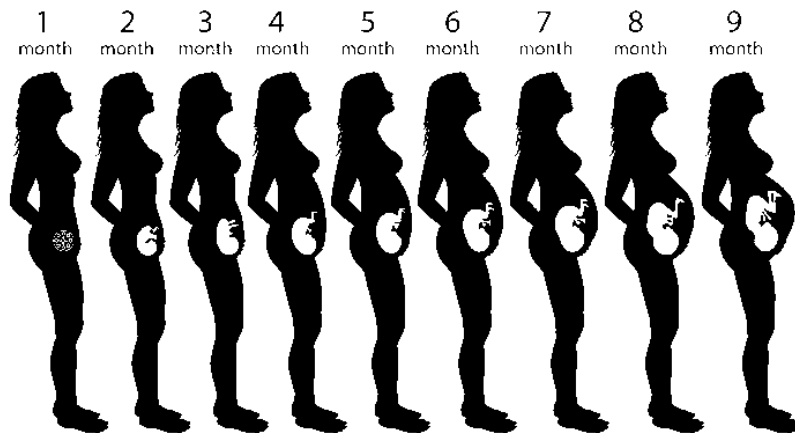
Myth: Homebirth is not safe

Fact: Research in North America, the UK and Australia and New Zealand shows that for women with low risk, healthy pregnancies, homebirth is equally as safe as giving birth in the hospital with comparable outcomes for mothers and babies. You can discuss with your midwife to see if you are a good candidate for a homebirth.



What does midwifery care look like?

Midwifery care is personal and one on one. Appointments are 30 to 45 minutes long. You will visit your midwife once a month until you are 28 weeks pregnant. After 28 weeks you will see your midwife every two weeks. Once you are 36 weeks pregnant appointments will be weekly until you deliver your baby. Usually women see their midwives 11-12 times before delivering. Midwives do home visits on day 1, 3 and 5 postpartum. After that your midwife may visit you at home or you may go into the clinic for your appointments. You and your baby will see your midwife every two weeks until six weeks postpartum. At six weeks your midwife transfers your care to your family doctor. If you do not have a family doctor your midwife can help you find one.



What happens at my first midwifery appointment?

At your first midwifery appointment you will be introduced to your midwife, shown around the midwifery clinic and have the midwifery model of care explained to you. The initial appointment is your chance to decide whether or not you will continue with midwifery care. The visit is about an hour long, as people typically have a lot of questions and there is a lot of information to cover.

What happens at a typical midwifery appointment?

Midwifery appointments are 30-45 minutes long. Midwives provide support, information, physical examinations and assessments. At the start of each visit you will use the washroom to urinate on a pH stick, and you may or may not weigh yourself, depending on what you and your midwife have discussed. You may ask your midwife any questions you have and talk about your concerns. Depending on how far along in pregnancy you are, you will talk with your midwife about tests and procedures and figure out which ones are right for you and your baby. Typically your midwife will discuss upcoming tests with you at the appointment before they would be performed, so that you can look at available information and talk about it with your partner and make a decision. Your midwife will also take your blood pressure, measure your fundal height (how much your uterus is growing) and listen to the baby's heart beat with a doppler or fetoscope.

Postpartum Visits

After you have had your baby, your midwife will come to your house on day 1, 3 and 5 postpartum. The postpartum care is usually women's favourite part of midwifery care. At these visits she will assess you and your baby. Midwives help with breastfeeding and adjustment to life as a new mom. After one week you will go to the midwifery clinic for your visits. Midwives remain available by pager 24 hours a day, every day. After six weeks your care will be transferred to your family doctor.

What if I need to have a Caesarean delivery?

If you have a midwife and you need to have a caesarean delivery your care will temporarily be transferred to the obstetrician performing the delivery. Once the operation is complete and you are recovering well, you will be back under your midwife's care. Your baby will be under your midwife's care from birth until six weeks postpartum.

Why would I need to see an Obstetrician?

Midwives are experts in normal, uncomplicated pregnancies. Some pregnancies are not low-risk, and some pregnancies develop complications over time such as Gestational Diabetes or Pregnancy-Induced Hypertension. If a complication develops in your pregnancy, your midwife may transfer your care to an obstetrician. In some cases, your midwife may attend your birth as a support person and may do your postpartum care, but not always. If your care is being transferred it is because an obstetrician, not a midwife, is the best care provider for you during your pregnancy.

How Do I Know If Midwifery Care Is Right For Me?

Midwives have the belief that women have the right to make informed choices. They are committed to providing women with all the information they need to know to make the best choices for them and their families. If you are healthy and having an uncomplicated pregnancy and wish to have a one-on-one relationship with your care provider, midwifery care is a good option for you.

Next Steps

Once you know you would like midwifery care, contact a midwifery clinic as soon as possible. Midwifery clinics have a limited number of spots as the demand for care is high. It is possible there is no room at the clinic you

contact, if this is the case they may refer you to a different clinic or you may wish to contact a few other clinics yourself. If you know of a specific midwife you would like to have as your care provider, mention her name when you contact the clinic and the clinic administrator will do her best to put you under her care. Here are the midwifery clinics that have privileges at hospitals in the Waterloo Region:

Blue Heron Midwives

Waterloo
519-954-0300
www.blueheronmidwives.com

Genesis Midwives

Kitchener
519-568-8282
www.genesismidwives.ca

Born Midwives

Cambridge
519-267-7266
www.bornmidwives.ca

K-W Midwifery Associates

Kitchener
519-569-8679
www.kwmidwifery.ca

Cambridge Midwives

Cambridge
519-624-9708
www.cambridgemidwives.ca

St. Jacobs Midwives

St. Jacobs
519-664-2542
www.stjacobsmidwives.on.ca

Countryside Midwifery Service

Milverton
519-595-4815

Stratford Midwives

Stratford
519-271-3490

Family Midwifery Care

Guelph
519-763-8568
www.familymidwiferycare.ca



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