

Philosophy of Midwifery Care

Midwives view pregnancy and birth as healthy and profound events in a woman's life. Fundamental to midwifery is the understanding that a woman's caregivers respect and support her so that she may give birth safely, with power and dignity. Midwives believe that involving the woman and her partner in shared decision-making is critical to empowering them to make their own best choices. Midwives promote wellness in women, babies and families. By combining medical care with social, emotional and psychological care, midwives provide holistic care to the family.

Informed Choices

Midwives promote decision-making as a shared responsibility, between the parents and the midwives. We encourage you to actively participate in your care. Your visits will include education and counseling about prenatal testing, labour/birth procedures and newborn care options. This education will include risks / benefits of, and alternatives to, procedures, tests, and medications, as well as relevant research and community standard practices, enabling you to make informed choices. In order to accomplish this, you are provided with half-hour long visits where we can answer your questions and provide detailed information about the choices you are making. Most significant tests / procedures will include a detailed written handout.

Continuity of Care

Midwives provide continuous, individualized care during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum; responding to a woman's social, emotional, cultural and physical needs. You will be cared for by a team of midwives, one primary and another backup, throughout pregnancy, labour and after the birth. This enables you to build a trusting, personal relationship with your care providers. A midwife is available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week for urgent concerns, and to attend your birth. Please note that on occasion, a back-up midwife may be covering our practice for a brief period of time. Student midwives may also be included in your care team.

Choice of Birthplace

Women are supported in their choice of birthplace - home or hospital. Your midwife will explain the risks and benefits of each so that you are able to make this important decision. Midwives respect the woman's right to choice of place of birth in accordance with the Standards of Practice of the College of Midwives of BC. You are encouraged to consider both home and hospital options and make the choice that is best for you and your family. In some situations a client choosing home birth may not remain eligible for it due to circumstances in the pregnancy or labour. In these cases, we will recommend hospital delivery.

Supportive Care Policy

Midwives may continue to provide supportive care to clients if we are required to transfer care to a physician. Usually the midwife will provide education, support, and advocacy, working in a collaborative manner with the physician(s). Primary care of mother and/or baby may be transferred back to the midwives if and when it becomes appropriate. These provisions allow your midwives to remain involved in your care should a complication arise, allowing the benefits of midwifery continuity of care.

Physician consultation or transfer of care

A pregnant woman has a choice of *either* a midwife, family physician, or obstetrician as her primary care provider. Midwives provide complete prenatal and birth care, as well as caring for you and your newborn for the first 6 weeks after the birth. After this time you will return to your family doctor for ongoing medical care.

If complications arise in your pregnancy or delivery, we will arrange a consultation with an obstetrician or pediatrician according to the guidelines provided by the College of Midwives of BC. In some cases, we may recommend a transfer of your care and/or your baby's care to an appropriate specialist. Should this occur we will remain involved in your care, providing support and information.

***A detailed guide to midwifery care from the College of Midwives of BC is available in our library.
This document includes a complete list of indications for physician consultation or transfer of care.
This is also available online at www.cmbc.bc.ca***