



On Midwives...

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Midwives...

- provide birthing women with support and guidance to ensure a healthy pregnancy, labour and delivery
- Understand that pregnancy and birth are normal processes,
- Work to optimize the well-being of mothers and their babies as the foundation of care giving.
- Approach the experience of childbirth as far more than a physical event, perceiving it as a profound emotional, mental and spiritual Rite of Passage for both mother and child.
- Work in partnership with mothers, their families and their communities, helping them to explore their options and make informed decisions based on their unique circumstances.

Why Choose a Midwife?

A midwife works as an autonomous practitioner, collaborating with a supervising physician and other health and social service providers whenever necessary, co-managing your care when needed. These may include medical doctors, psychotherapists, homeopathic practitioners, chiropractors, massage therapists, herbalists, oriental medical doctors, childbirth educators and doulas, hypnotherapists and others. Provides full prenatal care including a comprehensive medical history, physical exam, laboratory tests, and perinatal screening tests. With an emphasis on optimum wellness, she also provides in-depth counseling in the areas of nutrition, exercise, childbirth education and psycho-social issues.

Midwives also facilitates the preparation of a birth plan and emergency back-up plan with physician and hospital, and visits your home before the birth. She will discuss the supplies you will need and familiarizes you with the items she brings: including oxygen, IV, suturing materials, drugs to control haemorrhage, and neonatal resuscitation equipment.

Your midwife will assist your labour, delivery and immediate postpartum, performs a complete newborn exam, administers newborn screening tests or preventative measures (as parents desire), helps establish breastfeeding, and remains at your home until mother, baby and family are resting comfortably. She recommends the baby be seen by a paediatrician within a week after the birth for a complete evaluation.



Midwives also performs well mother and baby checks at home during the immediate postpartum period, and is available for phone consultation as needed. She will see you at two and six weeks postpartum and will offer counseling on appropriate family planning.

Why Choose Homebirth?

Giving birth naturally can be an experience of transformation and empowerment for everyone involved, and yet the intensity of the process can be challenging for many women. The key to a healthy birth is the ability to relax, as it allows the spontaneous rhythms of labour to progress without interference. The greatest obstacle is fear, for it generates tension and resistance and makes coping with contractions more difficult. In general, the more relaxed the mother, the easier the birth. Mothers birth best where they feel the most comfortable.

For many healthy, low-risk mothers, home provides a supportive and safe environment in which to give birth. Moreover, when a newborn baby is perceived to be a conscious, cognizant being, the manner in which he/she is born can have a far reaching effect both psychologically and spiritually. In the privacy and sanctity of home, a mother can surround herself with those she loves and trusts. Assisted by capable, experienced practitioners, the family has more freedom to create the experience they desire and welcome their new child with love and dignity.

Advantages for Mother

- Childbirth has the potential to be a profound, life-transforming experience for the woman, one which may facilitate emotional healing, strengthen and deepen her relationships to all aspects of herself--with far reaching effects to her children, her mate and family members.
- She is not subjected to routine procedures such as continuous electronic fetal monitoring, IVs, "preps", stirrups and episiotomy.
- She can eat, drink, walk, and rest freely, working with her own natural body rhythms.
- She has continuous care with the same attendant throughout the prenatal, labour, delivery and postpartum periods, facilitating trust and competent decision-making based on process as an individual.
- She is more likely to deliver without drugs, vacuum extractors or caesarean section when supported by caregivers who feel that birth is a normal physiological function.
- The woman and baby have less risk of infection in her own home.
- She is free to explore a variety of creative birthing options such as waterbirth, birthing stools, delivery positions like squatting or hands and knees, and may utilize comfort measures like candles, incense, inspiring music, and aromatherapy.



- She is less likely to experience postpartum depression when she has not been separated from her baby. In addition, when childbirth takes place at home, it becomes an integral part of family life, with father and/or siblings able to participate in as complete and appropriate a manner as possible. This assists postpartum adjustment for all family members.

Advantages for Baby

- The baby's experience at birth can be made as gentle and loving as possible, and routine procedures such as deep suctioning, bright lights and artificial warming can be avoided unless medically necessary.
- The healthy baby remains with the mother, preserving the mother-infant bonding so crucial to the development of attachment parenting.
- The baby is more likely to be born vaginally without breathing difficulties so often associated with anesthetics and cesarean birth.
- Breastfeeding is easier to establish when the baby can nurse on demand, and the mother is given immediate encouragement and instruction in proper technique.
- Baby is less likely to develop an infection at home.

Disadvantages

- Requires a higher level of effort and responsibility on the part of the parents, and may not be supported by medical doctors/society. While midwives are trained in emergency measures, access to some critical care measures and equipment may be delayed, and transport to a hospital may be required. In urban areas, access to emergency medical services are expeditiously obtainable, but be certain the midwife you choose works in consultation and collaboration with an obstetrician who is willing to assume care of her patients if necessary. In a home birth, you will have less immediate access to emergency treatment, and there are no guarantees your birth and baby will be perfect. Be prepared to take responsibility for your decision to have a home birth.