



Welcome

You have applied for care with our midwifery team. Before our clinic contacts you, it is important that you read through this handout to understand a bit more about what midwifery care is and what it isn't!

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What is a midwife?

Midwives are registered health care providers who care for low-risk people in pregnancy, birth and postpartum, as well as their newborns for the first 6 weeks of life.

Midwives are integrated into the health care system and OHIP funded. In Ontario, you can choose either a doctor or a midwife to care for you in your pregnancy, but not both.

If your birth is uncomplicated, your midwife will fulfill the role of both the nurse and doctor, ensuring both you and your baby are well, helping you to birth your baby, and monitoring you both after the postpartum. If complications arise, the midwife will help to grow your team by calling on the appropriate staff to ensure you receive great care.

We love working with doulas. They specialize in supporting people through labour or postpartum. They are a wonderful adjunct to our care, since our primary focus is more clinical.



Continuity of Care



Continuity of care means having the same health care provider(s) throughout your pregnancy, labour, birth and postpartum.

At our practice midwives work in teams of two and you will have an opportunity to meet with both your midwives throughout your pregnancy. One of these midwives will always be on-call and you can reach them 24/7 by using the pager for urgent concerns. When you go into labour one of your midwives will be with you through your labour and birth. In the rare occasion in which your midwives are already attending to another client in labour another midwife from our team will attend to you instead. Ideally, you should never meet more than 4 midwives in the course of your care.

Informed Choice

Informed choice means discussing the risks and benefits of all options available to you in pregnancy, birth and postpartum.

It is important to us that you are fully aware of all the choices available to you and feel empowered to make the best choice for you and your family.

As midwives are here to support & guide you, but not to make decisions for you.

Prenatal appointments

Appointments occur every 4-6 weeks until 28 weeks, then every 2-3 weeks until 36 weeks, then weekly until delivery.

Appointments are 30-45 minutes long and are mostly in-person, but sometimes may be offered virtually if deemed appropriate by the midwife or requested by the client.

Postpartum appointments

We care for both you and your baby as a pair whose health is interconnected.

One of the big bonuses of midwifery care is home visits, which are offered every few days in the first week postpartum. In these visits we will make sure your baby is gaining well and you are recovering well, and we also can provide assistance with infant feeding.

After the first week postpartum you will come back into clinic every 2-3 weeks until 6 weeks postpartum, when we will discharge you and your baby back into the care of your family doctor and/or pediatrician.

Please note: there may be times when your midwife is doing clinic while on call and this may mean that your appointment is rescheduled at the last minute if your midwife is called to a birth. We understand that this can be frustrating when it happens, but we do our best to avoid this situation happening often.

Where can I deliver my baby?

The midwives at our practice have privileges at the Montfort hospital and at the Ottawa Birth and Wellness Centre and we also do home births. We will discuss these options with you throughout your pregnancy to help you decide which option is best for you.

Does it cost anything?

Midwives are part of the Ontario health-care system and their services are completely funded by the Ministry of Health. Ontario residents who are not currently covered by OHIP can still receive midwifery care free of charge. Unfortunately we cannot care for residents of Quebec.



Can midwives order lab tests & ultrasounds?

Yes! Midwives can arrange all routine prenatal testing including: ultrasounds, genetic testing, standard laboratory and diagnostic tests.

Midwives can prescribe certain drugs to treat specific pregnancy-related conditions and to manage certain complications during labour & birth.

Midwives can manage epidurals and induction of labour.

Am I eligible for midwifery care?

Midwives are specialists in low-risk pregnancy, therefore we may not be the best care provider for you if you already know you have some factors that make your pregnancy high risk. Some pre-existing factors make you not eligible for midwifery care include: pre-existing hypertension, pre-existing diabetes, or a serious organ-related diagnosis. If you are unsure about if something makes you not a good candidate for midwifery care please discuss it with your midwife in your first visit.

Covid Policies:

As covid continues to be a risk to the pregnant people we care for, we have some protocols that we have put in place to protect our clients, staff and midwives.

Only our clients, their babies, and one partner or adult support person are permitted in the clinic. Although we love your families, we kindly ask that you make childcare arrangements for your children when attending appointments at our clinic. If you don't have childcare and are unable to attend your appointments for that reason, please speak to your midwife about your situation before your appointment.

If you or your household have any signs or symptoms of illness (cough, fever, vomiting, diarrhea), please call to reschedule your in-person appointment.

Please do not arrive any earlier than 5 minutes before your scheduled appointment. Please wear a mask and use hand sanitizer when you enter the clinic. Thank you for helping to keep everyone safe!



What are the next steps?

1. Please sign and return the attached form stating that you have read and understand this document
2. Please sign the consent and release for email & electronic communication form
3. Please bring a list of any medications you take to your first appointment

We look forward to meeting and getting to know you!

Client Informed Consent

Client Agreement

I have read this document in its entirety and I understand what I can expect during my course of care with the Midwifery Group of Ottawa.

I understand the covid policies I will need to follow by becoming a client of the Midwifery Group of Ottawa.

I understand that should issues arise at any point in my care that make me not suitable for midwifery care, an alternative care provider will be recommended.

I understand that my midwife will be primarily responsible for my care in pregnancy, and as such I shouldn't also seek pregnancy care from another provider, unless it is arranged by my midwife.

Client Name (and if Substitute Decision Maker – please add your name too):

Signature:

Date:

Client Consent and Release for Email and Electronic Communication

We are now able to offer the use of email for:

- Sending you requisitions for tests (labs, x-ray, ultrasound etc.)
- Giving you educational and health promotion resources
- Clinic Welcome package
- Client satisfaction surveys
- Verifying your contact information
- Asking for health card information

Please read to the bottom of this page and the next page to submit your consent. If you would like to receive our emails, please update your address book to accept emails from admin@midwiferygroupofottawa.com and don't forget to check your junk/spam folder. There are some limits on what and when we can email you, which we will explain here:

Email communication is not a substitute for meeting with your healthcare provider. Although technology is changing, the best way to share information with your health care provider is in person. Please tell us which email address you wish us to use. You must keep this up-to-date and tell us of any changes to your email address. Email should never be used in an emergency. If you have a health emergency, you should page your midwife, call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest hospital. Email should never be used for urgent problems (where you need a response from us by a certain time). If you have an urgent issue, you should page your midwife or make an appointment to see your midwife by calling the office. We do not read our email messages 24 hours per day 7 days per week. We cannot guarantee any particular response time for an email. If you require a response, please call the office. Emails should be short and for administrative requests only. Call the office if you have a clinical question you want to review with your midwife. Again please DO NOT email to tell us about sensitive health information.

There are some privacy risks in communicating by email:

- Email may not be secure. While we try to protect our emails we cannot guarantee the security and confidentiality of any email you send to or receive from us. As the message leaves the Midwifery Group of Ottawa it is sent across the internet and it could be intercepted and read.
- More than just your midwife may need to read your email. Administrative staff supporting your health care provider and people providing coverage for your health care provider (like a locum midwife) may also read any email you send.

- Emails may be filed on your health record depending on the content of the email message and can become a permanent part of your health record. As part of your record, emails may be shared within our team or third parties, with your consent or if we are permitted or required by law (including with other health care providers and insurance companies).
- Email is easy to forge, easy to forward (sometimes accidentally and to many people) and may exist forever.
- We recommend you give us a personal email address that only you read. We recommend that you use an email address and system that is password protected. If you give us a family email address or share your email address with anyone else, you should know that other people may also receive or read emails we send to you. If you use a work email address, your employer may have a right to archive and look at emails sent from their systems. We recommend you avoid using a work email address.
- The Midwifery Group of Ottawa is not responsible for information loss due to technical failures.
- The Midwifery Group of Ottawa may choose not to communicate with you by email if you are not able to follow our email rules.

Client Agreement and Release

I have read and fully understand this consent and release form. I understand the risks associated with using email with the Midwifery Group of Ottawa and I accept those risks. I understand the limits set out for using email and I agree to follow those limits. I understand if I no longer wish to communicate with the Midwifery Group of Ottawa by email, I will tell my healthcare provider or the front desk staff person. I agree that the Midwifery Group of Ottawa (which for this agreement and release includes the Midwifery Group of Ottawa and any affiliated midwife and their respective staff, agents and officers) shall not be responsible for any personal injury including death, or privacy breach (outside the control of the Midwifery Practice Group) or other damages as a result of my choice to communicate with the Midwifery Practice Group by email and I release and hold harmless the Midwifery Practice Group from any liability relating to communicating with me by email. If I had any questions about this form, I asked those questions and agree that my questions have been answered. I understand I have the right to have legal advice about signing this form and what it means to me and have either sought that advice or have chosen not to seek such advice.

Client Name (and if Substitute Decision Maker – please add your name too):

Signature:

Date:
