

Registered Midwives

Modern midwives are primary health care providers who combine knowledge of obstetrics with traditional midwifery practice. They provide care to low risk women in all stages of pregnancy from the prenatal phase to six weeks postpartum. Midwives may practice in a variety of settings including the home, community, hospitals, clinics or health units.

Midwives are recognized as responsible and accountable professionals who work in partnership with women to give the necessary support, care and advice during pregnancy, labour and the postpartum period. They conduct birth on their own responsibility and provide care for the newborn and the infant. This care includes preventative measures, the detection of complications in mother and child, the accessing of medical care or other appropriate assistance and the carrying out of emergency measures.

*Midwives have an important task in health counseling and education, not only for the woman, but also within the family and the community. This work involves prenatal education and preparation for parenthood and may extend to women's health, sexual or reproductive health and child care (**International Confederation of Midwives' Definition**).*

The midwifery model of care is based on the principles of informed choice, choice of birth place, evidence-based practice, respect for normal birth, continuity of care and judicious and appropriate use of medical technology. The needs of mothers and babies are at the centre of the midwifery model of care and the same midwife or another midwife with whom the woman is familiar, will attend her throughout pregnancy, labour, birth and the postpartum period. Women value the quality relationship they build with their midwife and the individualized care they receive.

The midwife's fundamental accountability is to the women in their care. They are also accountable to their peers, their regulatory body, the health agencies where they practice and to the public for safe, competent, ethical practice. To this end, the recommended education for entry to practice is a 4 year baccalaureate program in midwifery. Prior learning and experience assessment processes are also in place for foreign educated midwives who want to practice in Canada.

For more information, visit the websites listed below:

Canadian Association of Midwives: <http://www.canadianmidwives.org>

International Confederation of Midwives: <http://www.internationalmidwives.org>

Midwives Association of British Columbia College: www.bcmidwives.com

National Occupation Classification 2006 -

<http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2006/Welcome.aspx>