

WHAT IS A MIDWIFE?

Source : Ordre des sages-femmes du Québec

A midwife is a health professional trained to provide care and services to mothers and newborn babies during pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period up to six weeks after birth.

A midwife is a self-employed professional on contract with a Health and Social Services Centre. Midwives' services are fully covered if you have a valid health insurance card from RAMQ. Therefore, you do not have to pay for follow-up. Otherwise, you have to inquire about the cost of services, as they will be charged.

A midwife works at a birth centre or at a midwife service. She is a part of a multidisciplinary team consisting of Health and Social Services Centre or reference hospital professionals.

A midwife performs necessary clinical examinations. She can also order sonograms, prenatal screening tests and various laboratory tests. Her care focuses on the normality of the pregnancy, the birth and the postpartum period.

The Course of Follow-up with a Midwife

A team will be assigned to you at registration. The team consists of two midwives to guarantee their availability 24/7. You can reach them at any time. The principal midwife performs most of the follow-up. You will also meet her partner to foster trust. Midwives attach significance to continuity of care for proper follow-up.

The midwife checks all clinical parameters to evaluate the normal evolution of the pregnancy at each visit. She takes the time to discuss all matters that may worry the couples. Each visit takes about 50 minutes. A variety of subjects are discussed and advice is personalized and covers every important aspect of pregnancy. For example, the midwife might talk about nutrition, mild discomfort, available tests, sonograms, prenatal screening and other various subjects. You will have to make choices about your possible options. The midwife can refer you to other professionals if need be.

The follow-up is personalized for each woman. It is safe and respects your values. The midwife considers the family aspect of the pregnancy and birth, so spouses, children or any other important people in your life are welcome to join the process.



The Course of the Birth with a Midwife

You call the midwife on duty when the moment of birth arrives. During labour, the midwife will check all parameters that allow her to monitor the advancement of the labour and baby's well-being. She will attend to your needs and offer you personalized support. You will choose the position you prefer, eat if you want to, listen music or take a bath. Epidural anesthesia is not available at a birth centre, but midwives sometimes transfer women to a hospital so it can be administered to them.

The midwife must consult or transfer the care of the woman to a family physician, an obstetrician gynaecologist or a pediatrician if complications arise during labour. The midwife has all the requisite knowledge to detect potential complications and stabilize the situation before the woman reaches the hospital.

The Course of the Postnatal Follow-up with a Midwife

The midwife will come to your home many times after the birth. She will check all parameters to ascertain whether this period is elapsing normally for you and your baby. She will also provide you with appropriate advice. She can refer you and your newborn to other professionals if required.

Midwife Training

The Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières offers a four-year university program. The Baccalauréat en pratique sage-femme (Bachelor in Midwifery) fulfills all quality requirements and skills for midwife training.

Practitioner midwives have an obligation to acquire new professional skills through continuing education. Some training workshops are compulsory every two years, including training on properly detecting and handling obstetric emergencies, and training on care for newborns requiring resuscitation at birth.

