



Quick facts about choosing your birthplace

- Your midwife will assess your health needs and provide information to ensure you can make a safe and informed decision about where to have your baby.
- At your prenatal visits, you and your midwife will make a plan and talk about what would happen in an emergency in either a home or hospital birth.
- If you have planned a home birth, you can change your mind and move to a hospital once you are in labour. Ask your midwife what she will advise if you wish to change your plan from hospital birth to home birth once you are in labour.
- Your midwife may offer a home visit prior to the birth to discuss steps you can take to prepare for your labour, particularly if you are planning to labour or give birth at home.
- Because home birth is not as common as a hospital birth in Ontario, many women and their families have questions about choice of birthplace. Ask questions and get the information you need to make a decision that feels right for you.

“Having my baby in hospital was the right choice for me. I stayed at home with my midwife until I was well along in labour and then we moved into the hospital. I was relaxed, my birth went smoothly and I was able to go home again a few hours later.”

“I wanted to experience birth within the comfort of my own home. My midwives were confident and experienced in home birth. Having my baby at home was the safe and right choice for me.”



Association of Ontario Midwives

The Association of Ontario Midwives is the professional body representing midwives and the practice of midwifery in the province of Ontario.

Please visit www.aom.on.ca
Call us at 416-425-9974 or toll-free at 1-866-418-3773

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ONTARIO MIDWIVES

EXPERTS IN NORMAL PREGNANCY, BIRTH & NEWBORN CARE

Choice of Birthplace





A midwife can attend births at home or in hospital

As experts in normal birth, midwives provide care to women during labour and birth in either a woman's home or in a hospital. It's up to you.

Which setting is right for you?

There are many factors to consider when making a decision about where to have your baby. Your midwife can answer your specific questions, provide additional information and support you in making a decision that is right for you.

Midwifery clients who give birth in hospital:

- May feel safer and more relaxed than at home.
- May be able to go home within hours of giving birth if they wish.

Midwifery clients who give birth at home:

- May feel safer and more relaxed than at the hospital.
- Have the lowest likelihood of needing medical interventions such as c-section, epidural or episiotomy
- May find it advantageous not to travel before or after giving birth.
- May enjoy the familiarity and intimacy of being at home.

Whether you have a home birth or a hospital birth, you will:

- Typically have two midwives attending your birth: one to focus on you and the other to focus on your baby.
- Have access to a variety of methods of coping with labour. Midwives provide non-medical pain relief in both settings, but there are some drugs that you will only be able to access in hospital, such as an epidural.
- Be able to be admitted to or discharged from the hospital by your midwife.
- Have a midwife who is trained to manage emergencies. If needed, she can consult with doctors and nurses; if needed, your care can be transferred to a doctor. If this happens, your midwife will typically stay with you.
- Have a reduced chance of having interventions such as a c-section, forceps or vacuum, episiotomy, epidural or induction of labour
- Receive 6 weeks of postpartum care. Some postpartum appointments with your midwife will take place at home, and some will take place at her clinic. She will monitor you and your baby and provide breastfeeding support.



Is home birth safe? Points to consider when making your decision:

- Studies show that home birth is at least as safe as hospital birth.
- The equipment that a midwife brings to a home birth is similar to the equipment in a community hospital, including oxygen, medications to stop bleeding, and sterile instruments.
- Women who plan a home birth can choose to move to hospital during labour. About 25% of women who plan home birth transfer to hospital, most often because of a long labour, but also in order to access medical pain relief if they wish. If it becomes medically necessary to go to the hospital during your labour, your midwife is trained to make this assessment.
- A home birth is not appropriate for all women. Your health during pregnancy and labour and your personal circumstances are considerations to discuss with your midwife when making this decision.
- Hospital birth, as a back-up for home births, is part of what makes home birth safe.