

Your Circle of Support

Your Personal Support Team

Think about who you can count on to provide emotional and practical help – everything from holding your hand during labour to babysitting.

This may include:

- your partner(s)
- family members
- friends, neighbours or co-workers
- members of your cultural, religious or community groups
- members of your prenatal group
- child birth educator
- a doula (trained labour companion)



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Listen to your partner's concerns.
- Take part in appointments and prenatal classes.
- Help prepare your home for the baby.
- Be involved in the labour and birth.
- Be a hands-on and equal partner in child care and household duties.
- Take parental leave or arrange holidays so you can be home to help your family adjust to life with a new baby.
- Share in a healthy lifestyle before, during and after pregnancy.
- Get advice from friends and family on how they supported their partners during pregnancy.
- Find people and groups that can support you during this time of change.

Your Health Care Support Team

Your health care team may include:

- a midwife
- a family doctor
- an obstetrician
- hospital, public health, primary care or community health nurses
- HealthLink BC (nurses, pharmacists, dietitians and other health care providers)
- a lactation consultant
- a nurse practitioner
- a counsellor
- a naturopathic doctor
- a pharmacist
- a social worker
- a dentist or dental hygienist



TRY THIS

Decide who you'd like to have on your support team, then record their contact information on the inside front cover of this book.

Doctor or midwife?

In B.C., you can choose a registered midwife or a family physician to care for you during pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period. If your pregnancy is high risk, you will receive care from an obstetrician in addition to your physician or midwife.

Both doctors and midwives are an important part of the B.C. health care system, but not every community has both.

Doctors work in clinics, usually deliver babies in hospital and provide follow-up care in a clinic after a baby is born. If your family doctor doesn't provide maternity services, they will refer you to another doctor or midwife who will take care of you during your pregnancy and postpartum period.

Midwives work in clinics, deliver babies in hospital and in homes and provide follow-up care and support after a baby is born. To find a midwife, visit bcmidwives.com.

Family doctors, obstetricians and midwives all share the same goal: the health of you and your baby. Focus on finding someone whose approach matches your wishes and values.

There are some clinics where midwives, family doctors and nurses work together to provide care.

Choosing health care providers

Ask for recommendations from friends or health care professionals. You can also call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 to ask about services near you.

Questions to ask:

- Do you provide care during pregnancy?
- What are your policies around phone calls, home visits and on-call coverage?
- How often will I likely need to see you?
- Will you attend the birth?
- Will you support my preferences in terms of where I'll give birth, who will attend and what birthing positions and pain control I'll use?
- Will you provide breastfeeding or chestfeeding support?



DID YOU KNOW?

Indigenous midwives are available to provide care for Indigenous and non-Indigenous birthing people, newborns, families and communities. Indigenous midwives are committed to reclaiming well-person care. They are devoted to upholding and honouring traditions, rights, culture and language and bringing birthing to communities. Please review the Midwives Association of British Columbia, Indigenous Midwives Advisory Council website for more information. bcmidwives.com/Indigenous_Midwives_Advisory_Council.html



DID YOU KNOW?

Transgender, Two-Spirit and gender-diverse parents and caregivers can find supportive, gender-affirming health care providers through Trans Care BC: transcarebc.ca/ or 1-866-999-1514 (toll-free).



DID YOU KNOW?

B.C.'s Medical Services Plan will cover the cost for a doctor or a midwife or an obstetrician during your pregnancy.

