



### Midwifery clients who give birth in a birth centre:

- May feel safer and more relaxed than at the hospital.
- Will have a low likelihood of receiving medical interventions such as C-section, epidural or episiotomy.
- May enjoy the comfortable, intimate setting of a birth centre.
- Will be able to go home within hours of giving birth.

### 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.



*“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.”*

*“My pregnancy and labour progressed without complications and I didn’t feel the need to be in hospital. The birth centre provided me with a safe, comfortable environment when my baby was born.”*

There are hundreds of midwives in Ontario. More than 150,000 babies have been born under midwifery care since the profession was regulated in 1994, including more than 35,000 births at home.

For more information and clinic locations:

[OntarioMidwives.ca](http://OntarioMidwives.ca)

416.425.9974  
(toll free 1.866.418.3773)



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# Choice of Birthplace



As experts in normal birth, midwives provide care to clients during labour and birth in a client’s home, in a birth centre\* 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 at home:

- May feel safer and more relaxed than at the hospital or birth centre.
- Have the lowest likelihood of receiving 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.



\*Birth centres are only available in some Ontario communities.



## Are birth centres safe? Points to consider when making your decision:

- Studies show that births attended at a birth centre are at least as safe as hospital birth.
- The equipment available at a birth centre is similar to the equipment in a community hospital, including oxygen, medications to stop bleeding and sterile instruments. Birth centres also offer showers, tubs, birth balls and birth stools, nitrous oxide and TENS machines for a variety of pain management techniques.
- Clients who plan to give birth in the birth centre can choose to move to hospital during labour. The majority of clients who transfer to hospital do so because of a long labour. If it becomes medically necessary to go to the hospital during your labour, your midwife is trained to make this assessment.
- Giving birth at a birth centre is not appropriate for all clients. Your health during pregnancy and labour are considerations to discuss with your midwife when making this decision.
- Part of what makes birth centres safe is the ability to transfer to hospital if the need arises.



## 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.
- Clients who plan a home birth can choose to move to hospital during labour. About 25% of clients who plan home birth transfer to hospital, most often because of a long labour. 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 clients. Your health during pregnancy and labour and your personal circumstances are considerations to discuss with your midwife when making this decision.
- Part of what makes home birth safe is the ability to transfer to hospital if the need arises.



## Whether you give birth at home, a birth centre or a hospital, 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 all 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 and discharged from the birth centre or hospital by your midwife.
- Have a midwife who is trained to manage emergencies. Midwives work closely with doctors and nurses when needed. If your care is transferred to a doctor, 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 six weeks of care after your baby's birth. Some postpartum appointments with your midwife will take place at home, and some will take place in the midwifery clinic. Your midwife will monitor you and your baby and provide breastfeeding support.

## Quick facts about choosing your birthplace

- Your midwife will assess your health needs throughout your pregnancy and labour, and will 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 any birth setting.
- If you have planned to give birth at home or birth centre, you can change your mind and move to a hospital once you are in labour. Ask your midwife what will happen if you wish to change your plan from hospital birth to home or birth centre 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 birth at home or in a birth centre is not as common as a hospital birth in Ontario, many clients and their families have questions about choice of birthplace. Ask questions and get the information you need to make a decision that is right for you.