

The Midwifery Scope of Practice

Midwives work as specialists in normal birth, this includes the assessment and monitoring of women and their babies during pregnancy, labour, birth, and the postpartum period. Midwives will have privileges to do deliveries in the hospital or, if appropriate, in the comfort of the client's own home. During labour and birth, a midwife stays with a woman and manages all her care. A second attendant – either a midwife or another qualified care provider will also attend the birth.

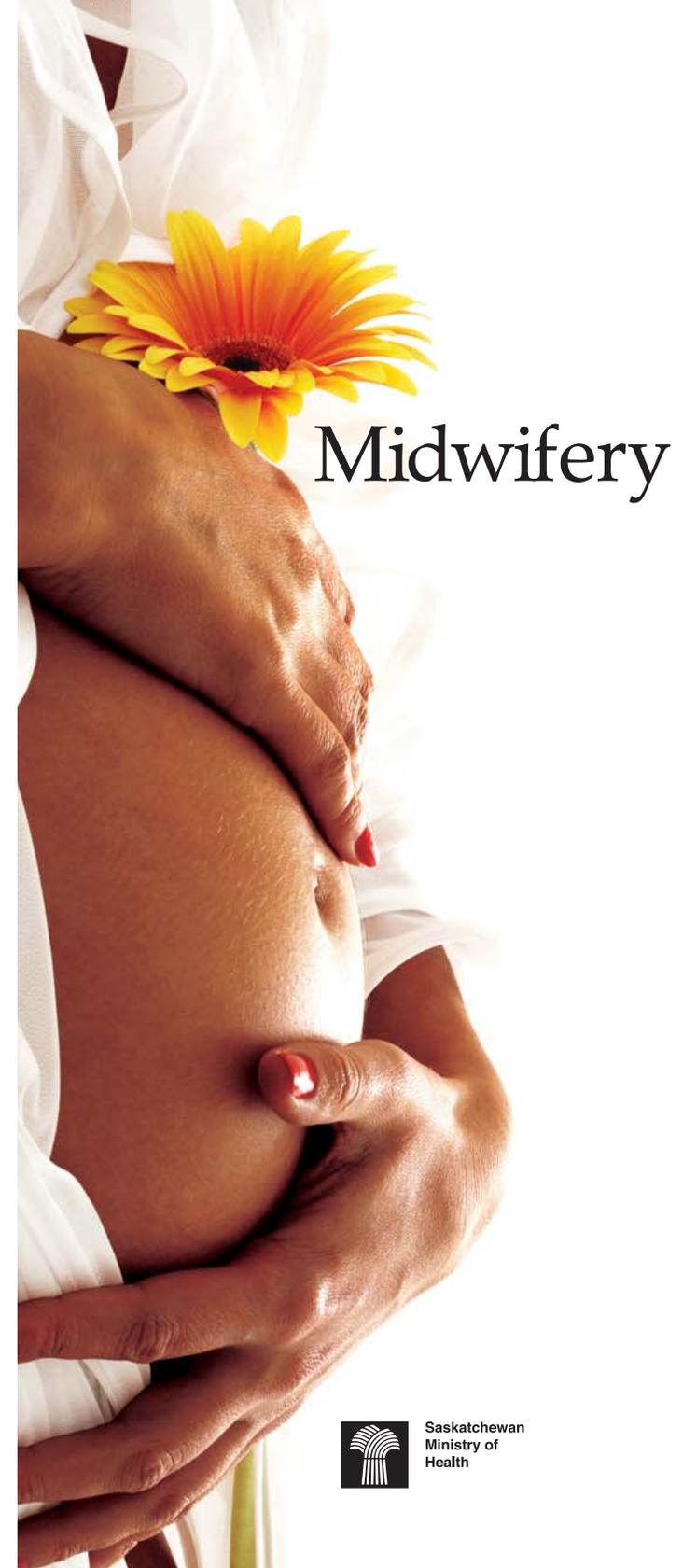
As primary caregivers for childbirth, midwives regularly update certification for the management of maternal and newborn emergency situations. Should a complication arise at any point during the pregnancy, labour, birth, or postpartum period, midwives consult with specialists such as obstetricians and paediatricians.

Midwives are able to order tests and assessments including ultrasounds during pregnancy and diagnostic tests for newborns. They are also able to prescribe and administer many common drugs that are used during pregnancy, birth, and throughout the postpartum period.

Registered Midwives

The Saskatchewan College of Midwives governs registered midwives in the province. Registered midwives trained in Canada have four years of university education in midwifery. Midwives who are trained outside of Canada, or who have other training backgrounds, are able to have their skills and experiences assessed through a prior learning and experience assessment (PLEA) process. All registered midwives in Saskatchewan must satisfy the entry and practice requirements of the Saskatchewan College of Midwives in order to practice midwifery.

In addition to this education, midwives must maintain certification in emergency skills, including: adult and newborn resuscitation, managing postpartum haemorrhage, assessing and managing fetal and neonatal concerns, and handling delivery complications. Midwives are trained to manage emergency situations associated with labour and delivery. They carry emergency equipment to home births, including resuscitation equipment and suturing supplies.



The Midwifery Model of Care

Midwifery in Saskatchewan is based on a multidisciplinary, community-based, primary care model. The midwifery model offers:

- Woman and family-centred care promoting wellness in women, babies and families;
- Individualized care that respects physical, emotional and cultural diversity;
- Informed choice: women are active decision makers in the care they receive;
- An opportunity to build a strong and trusting relationship with a small maternity care team;
- Continuity of care throughout pregnancy and up to six weeks after delivery;
- Choice of birthplace;
- Low-intervention; and,
- Consultation and collaboration with other health and social care providers throughout care.

What is a Midwife?

A midwife is a health care professional who works in partnership with an expectant mother and her family during a low-risk pregnancy. Midwives attend births both in and out of the hospital and provide primary care, support, and guidance during pregnancy, labour, birth, and for six weeks postpartum. Midwives work collaboratively with fellow midwives, nurses, physicians, public health workers, and others to ensure healthy outcomes for a mother and her baby. Midwives are registered and licensed with the Saskatchewan College of Midwives and have special education and training.

What type of care do midwives provide?

Individual or small teams of midwives provide continuity of care to women and their infants throughout pregnancy, labour, birth and six-weeks postpartum. A midwife is available on-call throughout the course of care. Midwives spend time with their clients in order to build trusting relationships and provide individualized care. They actively encourage informed decision making by providing women with complete, relevant, and objective information in a non-authoritarian manner. They provide care by sharing information about the pregnancy experience, tests and procedures that may be performed, as well as choices that may arise during pregnancy. Midwives help families welcome the newborn through breastfeeding assistance and comprehensive care during the postpartum period.

Do I have to pay for midwifery care?

Where a midwife is an employee of a Regional Health Authority, there is no cost to the family. If a midwife chooses to establish a private practice, they will charge clients directly for their services.

Should I see a midwife and doctor at the same time?

The choice of caregiver during your pregnancy is up to you. Midwives work with a team of other low-risk obstetrical providers that specialize in caring for healthy pregnant women and their newborns. Your team will share a similar philosophy of care. You will meet your team and become familiar with them when the time comes to give birth to your baby. About six weeks postpartum, your care is transferred back to your Family Physician who will resume responsibility for the health of you and your new baby.

Can I have a midwife and give birth in hospital?

Yes, birth options are available in and out of hospital.

