



## Health Career Directory

### Midwife

#### Overview

This supports women in having access to continuous care, informed choices and choice of birth place. Midwifery care is based on the respect for pregnancy as a state of health, and childbirth as a normal physiologic process. Midwifery care respects the diversity of women's needs and the variety of personal and cultural meanings which women, families, and communities bring to the pregnancy, birth and early parenting experience.

Some of the main duties of a Midwife are to:

- listen, observe, educate, guide and care
- order and interpret tests and discuss results
- screen for physical, psychological, emotional and social health
- consult with, and refer to, specialists when necessary
- carefully monitor to detect abnormalities in pregnancy and birth
- do home visits postpartum (after birth)
- help with breastfeeding and adjusting to life with a new baby.

Midwifery involves antenatal (before birth) education and preparation for parenthood. The practice of Midwifery extends into certain areas of gynecology, family planning and child care.

Midwives work together and with other health professionals. They practice evidence based - woman centered - maternity and newborn care. Midwives are an established part of the BC health care system. They are registered with and regulated by the [College of Midwives of British Columbia](#): according to the BC Health Professions Act, the Midwives Regulation and the CMBC Bylaws. Midwives have been regulated and legally recognized as autonomous (independent) health care practitioners in BC since 1998. Midwives have standards that guide their practice when providing care and consulting with or transferring care to a physician when appropriate.

Midwives consult with each other when they face challenging professional situations. They also consult with family doctors, obstetricians, pediatricians and other specialists as the need arises.

To maintain registration to practice a midwife must complete regular re-certification in neonatal resuscitation, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the management of maternal and neonatal emergencies. Midwives also participate in regular peer case reviews.

One does not need to be a nurse to become a midwife in Canada - they are a separate profession.

Source: <http://www.bcmidwives.com/>

#### Who is suited for this occupation?

Midwives need a diverse set of skills and qualities for their practices. Not only do they need excellent social skills in order to give care in a nurturing way. They also need to be able to think critically and respond quickly to situations that need speedy action.

Midwives are most effective when they have the following skills and characteristics:

- Strong interest and knowledge of: developmental stages, behavioural sciences, pathophysiology, psychopathology, epidemiology, and clinical diagnoses
- Ability to communicate and collaborate with patients and families about pregnancy, delivery, and post-partum care
- Ability to collaborate, consult with and refer patients to physicians and other health professionals, as required
- Ability to self-direct and adapt effectively with other professionals in complex, dynamic and stressful environment
- Confident, self-motivated, and resourceful
- Have good physical and emotional stamina
- Compassionate and patient
- Good communication and counselling skills
- A clean record, no prior criminal background.

They should enjoy:

- Working with different groups of populations and integrating cultural practices/views towards pregnancy and birth
- Teaching new parents about prenatal care, birthing process, and how to care for new born
- Working collaboratively and in a consultation role with all other health professionals
- Using standard and specialized equipment to gather assessments to provide proper care, and the performance of components, assemblies, and systems
- Analyzing and diagnosing problems

### **Who employs Midwives?**

Midwives are self-employed and bill the provincial government for the services they provide to the public. Midwives work in the community and usually have offices similar to a doctor's office.

They also have hospital privileges in collaboration with pediatricians.

Midwives work in both urban and areas. They work in groups so someone from their office is always available. They do deliveries at home, and in the hospital.

### **Registering to Practice Midwifery in BC**

All midwives in BC must be registered with the College of Midwives of BC, in order to practice. Midwifery is not a recognized profession in all provinces.

### **Salary**

Midwife:

Full Course Care: **\$3000.00 - \$3, 5000 per birth, 2-4 clients per month, and maximum of 40 clients per year** (approximate breakdown into the following):

First trimester: 253.50 – includes prenatal tests

Second trimester: 253.20

Third trimester: 507.11

Labour and Delivery: 1014.04

Post-Partum Care: 1014.04 – includes 6 weeks post-delivery care

Although their salary may seem high, midwives pay for their own operating costs, liability insurance, and buy their own health benefits. They also have no maternity leave benefits and are not part of any pension plans. They therefore must save for their own retirement funds.

### **Required Training and Education to Become a Midwife**

In order to become a registered midwife in British Columbia, an applicant must complete a four year baccalaureate midwifery program. This must be from a recognized midwifery program, in order to be eligible to register with the College of Midwives of British Columbia.

Admission requirements for high-school students to enter a midwifery program must complete:

- BIOL 215 (Anatomy and Physiology) or Chemistry (in Ontario, both are recommended)
- ENGL 112 (Strategies for University Writing).
- Social Science (e.g., history, sociology, psychology, geography, or law)

Please see the specific admission requirements of the institution you are intending to attend.

A Midwifery program focuses on women's participation in their health care. It prepares students to become midwives with the ability to give the necessary supervision, care, and advice to women during pregnancy, labour, and the postpartum period. It also prepares students to deliver babies, and how to care for a newborn infant. All programs work closely with practising midwives and other maternity care providers to ensure thorough and quality clinical environment for students. The programs include both academic courses and six terms of full-time midwifery placements.

One does not have to be a registered nurse first before becoming a midwife. Midwifery is a separate program. However, many registered nurses have chosen to do a graduate degree so that they can become a midwife.

Source:

[http://laurentian.ca/Laurentian/Home/Academic+Calendar/en/Undergraduate+Programs/Midwifery/Midwifery.htm?Laurentian\\_Lang=en-CA](http://laurentian.ca/Laurentian/Home/Academic+Calendar/en/Undergraduate+Programs/Midwifery/Midwifery.htm?Laurentian_Lang=en-CA)

## **Career Advancement**

Most midwives enjoy their independent practice so much that they tend to stay in clinical practice for a long period of time. They enjoy providing one on one care to their new and repeat parents. However, for those who seek further career advancement, midwives can move to management roles or formal teaching roles at various educational institutions.

## **Resources**

### **Education Programs**

There are many routes to becoming a midwife. Below are the Canadian education programs. Please note that you should discuss any education program you are interested in with the College of Midwives of BC if you wish to practice in BC after graduation.

University of British Columbia Midwifery Education Program  
<http://www.midwifery.ubc.ca>

Laurentian University  
<http://www.laurentian.ca>

McMaster University  
<http://www.fhs.mcmaster.ca/midwifery>

Ryerson University (offers part-time program)  
<http://www.ryerson.ca/midwife/>

### **Financial assistance and bursaries**

For information about Canada student loans and grants, please visit:  
[http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada\\_student\\_loan/index.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/index.shtml)

- Each educational institution has their own scholarship and bursaries available to students who enroll in their program.

## **Associations**

College of Midwives of British Columbia

<http://www.cmbc.bc.ca/>

Midwives Association of British Columbia

<http://www.bcmidwives.com/communications/first-hands>