

Midwives in Ontario can offer women and their families the option of having a home or hospital birth. They are comfortable in either setting. Where you deliver your baby is your choice.

Is it Safe?

In the past, more and more women began to deliver their babies in the hospital. At the same time, the overall health of the population was improving and more women had access to trained health care professionals in childbirth and pregnancy.

These factors led to the misconception that hospital birth was a safer option for women than home delivery. In fact, studies have found that home birth and hospital birth are equally safe for women having an uncomplicated pregnancy.

Advantages of Homebirth

* Higher satisfaction rates
* Lower rates of intervention and need for pain relief
* More control
* Water birth an option
* Unlimited number of support people
* Familiar setting (bathroom, shower)
* More privacy
* Decreased risk of acquiring a hospital infection
* Less risk of postpartum bleeding, extensive tearing, wound infection, fever, infant resuscitation

Disadvantages of Homebirth

* No access to medical pain relief
* Small risk of going to the hospital (about 4% for pain relief, 7% for fetal or maternal concerns)

New Life Midwives has privileges at Lakeridge Health in Oshawa (LHO) and Northumberland Hills Hospital in Cobourg (NHH). LHO is a “level two” hospital with twenty-four hour pediatric coverage and a neonatal nursery. NHH is a “level one” hospital. Both hospitals have twenty-four hour anesthetic and cesarean section capabilities. At NHH every room is private and you labour, deliver and recover in the same room. There is also rooming in for partners. Both hospitals have rooming in for babies.

Advantages of Hospital Birth

* Access to medical pain relief
* Some people feel safer

Disadvantages to Hospital Birth

* Increased risk of acquiring an infection
* Increased risk of medical interventions, including cesarean section

If your midwife is concerned about your suitability for a homebirth she will discuss this with you as part of the information you will need to make an informed choice. Some concerns may be

* Unstable fetal position
* Breech presentation
* Low hemoglobin
* Pre-term or post term baby
* Pregnancy induced hypertension
* Indications for a transfer of care

Midwives are experienced and comfortable delivering babies at home. They are trained for unanticipated emergencies and carry medications to deal with concerns that may arise. Midwives are skilled in neonatal resuscitation, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency skills. Midwives monitor the mother and baby’s health throughout the labour, delivery and after the delivery. If any concerns arise they will inform you about them right away and the treatment options available.

Midwives carry equipment and medication to enable them to provide safe care in the home setting. This includes:

* Doppler to listen to the baby’s heart during labour
* Birth instruments
* Suction equipment for baby
* Oxygen for mother and baby
* Resuscitation equipment to help baby breathe
* Suturing equipment
* Intravenous equipment
* Medications for bleeding and for baby

If there are no concerns the midwife will stay in the home for about 3 hours after delivery. They will assist with breastfeeding and ensure both mother and baby are doing well.

If you are interested in having a homebirth please read the homebirth studies binder, or come to homebirth night, hosted by the midwives.