



March 15, 2020

## **COVID-19 Update**

Dear Clients of Mountain Midwifery Care,

We'd like to take this opportunity to communicate with you about plans we have made to continue to provide safe care during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Your health and our health are the top priority at this time. The midwives will follow all employee health guidelines regarding self-isolation if they are at risk of COVID-19 or screen positive. This may mean that your visit or birth will be attended by a different midwife.

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath, please follow the advice of Hamilton Public Health and call the COVID-19 Hotline at 905-546-2424 ext. 7970 to see if you qualify for testing. Do not attend your clinic appointment but call ahead and we will discuss what to do next.

### **In-person clinic visits:**

Starting this week, we will follow what other midwifery and physician clinics are doing and limit the risk of exposure by having you come to clinic less often. To guide this decision, we are using the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines on the number of prenatal appointments for a positive outcome. This includes: One visit in the first trimester (we will book initial appointments for 10 weeks), two visits in the second trimester at 20 and 26 weeks, and then more frequent visits in the third trimester at 30, 34, 36, 38, 39 and 40 weeks.

### **Phone Assessments:**

We can achieve a lot over the phone including answering your questions, informing you about relevant topics related to pregnancy and birth, arranging ultrasounds, sending prescriptions to the pharmacy, and ordering bloodwork. We will plan to book phone appointments at 15-16 weeks to bridge the gap between 10 and 20 weeks and to ensure that all laboratory and ultrasound reports have been explained. If you would prefer a phone assessment over an in-person visit for any of your other scheduled visits, please let us know.

**Our clinic space:**

On Monday March 16 we will be removing all the toys and magazines from the waiting room to reduce the number of objects that are touched, and to make cleaning easier. We will continue to wipe off surfaces in the clinic room in between clients, and, as always, wash our hands or use hand sanitizer in between clients. We ask that you also use hand sanitizer when you arrive for your appointment. Please limit the number of people who come to the clinic for your appointment. We would appreciate children remaining home if possible.

**Our Hospital, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton:**

The Birthing Unit is equipped with the items required to care for pregnant women with COVID-19. The isolation room has a special filter, and all health care professionals will use personal protective equipment such as a gown, mask, gloves, and face shield to provide care. If a pregnant person develops more severe symptoms, her care could be moved to another area of the hospital in close consultation with other physicians. The hospital has initiated strict visitor limitations. You may have one person with you during your birth and postpartum stay. That person may be with you at any time of the day or night. Children, including siblings of the new baby, are not allowed to visit the hospital at this time.

**Home Births:**

We will continue to offer choice of birthplace. Home birth can be a great way to keep mothers and babies out of the hospital, however, we need to be certain that every person requesting a home birth is a good candidate for home birth (ie. low risk of complications). If any household members are sick or have screened positive for COVID-19, midwives will not be able to attend you at home and will request that the birth occurs in the hospital where there is a supply of masks and gowns.

**Continuing Updates:**

There are changes happening every day as the pandemic is evolving. We are hopeful that the measures taken by the Canadian government to reduce travel, close schools, and cancel large events will slow the spread of COVID-19 and allow the healthcare system to properly care for those who need it. We will do our best to keep you up-to-date as time goes on.

We know it can be stressful to deal with situations like this, especially while you are pregnant or have a new baby at home. Our hope is that you remain healthy and calm in the weeks ahead.

Sincerely,

All of us at Mountain Midwifery Care



mountain midwifery care

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## Appendix

### Summary of things that you can do at this time:

- Practice social distancing – avoid crowded places and unnecessary travel.
- Wash your hands, try not to touch your face, and reconsider hugging and handshaking
- Avoid contact with sick people and stay home when you are sick. Cough or sneeze into your shoulder or arm.
- If possible, come on your own to your clinic appointments to avoid extra people in our waiting room.
- On arrival to our clinic, clean your hands with hand sanitizer.

### Resources:

Hamilton Public Health COVID-19 Hotline: 905-546-2424 ext. 7970

<https://www.hamilton.ca/public-health/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-covid-19>

Public Health Ontario

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus>