



# Coronavirus/COVID-19 and Your Care at Plum Midwifery

Dear Plum clients,

We recognize that this is a stressful and uncertain time to be pregnant or parenting. The information and best practices to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) are changing daily, and your midwives at Plum are staying up to date and taking all necessary steps to protect you, ourselves and the general public. Midwives are front-line health care workers providing care in both the community and in the hospital and in order to continue to provide your care, we are making the following changes effective immediately. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

## PRENATAL CARE SCHEDULE

We will be adopting the following schedule of visits for your prenatal care. This is recommended by the World Health Organization to provide safe care during a pandemic. All routine testing including ultrasounds will be organized for you at the usual times. This schedule may be adjusted depending on your unique needs or any risk factors. If you have an appointment already booked, our MOA Regula may call you to reschedule in accordance with this schedule.

- Visit 1: Between 0-12 weeks - by phone/video
- Visit 2: 12-16 weeks - in clinic or by phone/video
- Visit 3: 20 weeks - in clinic or by phone/video
- Visit 4: 26 weeks - in clinic
- Visit 5: 30 weeks - in clinic
- Visit 6: 34 weeks - in clinic
- Visit 7: 36 weeks - in clinic
- Visit 8: 38 weeks - in clinic
- Visit 9: 40 weeks - in clinic, then ongoing visits as needed

## POSTPARTUM CARE SCHEDULE

We are significantly modifying our schedule of postpartum visits. If you have a hospital birth, you may be asked to stay in the hospital until 24 hours postpartum in order to complete your newborn's important tests and be seen by the midwife prior to discharge. If you have a home birth, your midwife will see you as soon as possible after 24 hours. The postpartum schedule of visits will be as follows:

Visit 1: Day 1 or 2 - in hospital or at home

Visit 2: Day 3 or 4 - at home

Visit 3: 1 week postpartum - in clinic

Visit 4: 3 weeks postpartum - in clinic

Visit 5: 6 weeks postpartum - in clinic

## ETIQUETTE/HYGIENE AT CLINIC AND HOME VISITS

- Do not come to clinic if you are having any signs of illness (fever, cough, increased mucous production, shortness of breath, sore throat, unusual fatigue or malaise).
- Please inform your midwife if you or any of your family members have any of these signs of illness for a planned home visit or birth.
- If possible, please come alone to prenatal and postpartum visits (excluding your newborn of course). If you require transportation, please ask your support person to wait in the car.
- When you arrive for your scheduled appointment, please wait in your car for your midwife to call you. **IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE HAVE UP TO DATE CONTACT INFORMATION.** We will do the discussion portion of your visit, answer questions and organize testing over the phone to limit your time in the clinic and then provide a brief clinical assessment.
- Wash your hands immediately on arrival to the clinic. Your midwife will do the same on arrival to your home.
- Pregnancy assessment includes BP check, position check and belly measurement, listening to baby's heartbeat.
- Postpartum assessment includes a baby weight check as well as a brief clinical assessment of both baby and parent.
- Wash your hands again and return to your vehicle.
- Your midwife will be wearing a mask and gloves for home visits even though you are asymptomatic for COVID-19.
- Our preference for home visits is to see only you and your baby in a separate room. If the other parent, support people or siblings wish to participate, we will require that social distancing is observed - 2 m/6.5 feet.

## COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AND CARE

For the most up to date and locally relevant information, please access this site which is frequently updated as recommendations evolve:

<https://www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/diseases-conditions/novel-coronavirus-information>

If you believe you have COVID-19 symptoms, the first step is to complete this online self-assessment to determine if you need to access care: <https://bc.thrive.health/>

Symptoms of COVID-19 include the following:

- Most common presentation is mild respiratory illness - fever (89%), cough (68%), fatigue (38%), thick mucous especially when coughing (34%), shortness of breath (19%), sore throat (14%), headache (14%)
- Uncommonly, gastrointestinal symptoms may be present - diarrhea or vomiting

Pregnancy-specific considerations:

- Pregnant people are not more susceptible to coronavirus or COVID-19.
- Almost all pregnant people infected will develop mild to moderate cold or flu-like symptoms (less than 20% will develop severe symptoms or require hospitalization).
- Pregnant people with mild to moderate symptoms should stay home, treat symptoms as needed and self-isolate for 14 days.
- Pregnant people should stay out of the hospital unless they are in need of urgent medical or obstetrical assessment or care.
- **If you have suspected or confirmed COVID-19, please inform your midwife. We will provide guidance for self-care at home and may arrange increased follow-up for you or your baby (ie. ultrasound).**

## COVID-19 AND YOUR BIRTH

### Hospital Birth

- We will be updating the latest COVID-19 Patient Handout from the North Island Hospital - Comox Valley on our Facebook page on a regular basis. Please follow [Plum Midwifery](#) if you are on Facebook.
- Only one support person is allowed with you during labour and they must not have any symptoms of illness. This must be the same person during your entire stay.
- We realize this impacts families who have chosen to work with a doula during labour. Unfortunately, this is an Island-wide policy and needs to be consistent to be effective.
- No visitors during your entire hospital stay. This includes siblings and grandparents.
- Please call ahead to the unit at 250-331-5968 if you have symptoms of illness and are coming in in labour or for another type of assessment (ie. NST).
- The anaesthetists at Comox Valley Hospital are recommending that patients consider early epidural to reduce the chance of requiring a general anaesthetic if Caesarean section is required. Of course, the decision to get an epidural ultimately rests with the birthing person.
- If you have symptoms of illness, your entire care team will wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to protect against possible transmission.

### Home Birth

- Home birth is still an option for low-risk clients at this time. Be aware that this may change depending on evolving evidence and recommendations and the availability of PPE.

- Please limit your support people during labour to 1-2 people if possible. 1 is preferable but we will allow more provided they have no symptoms of illness, strict hand hygiene is used by all and social distancing is observed wherever possible.
- If any of your family members are sick (including children) we will need to recommend a hospital birth in order to protect your midwives and our other clients.
- We are restricting water births at this time. This is based on a recommendation from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in the UK.

## COVID-19 AND YOUR BABY

- Even if the birthing person is suspected or positive for COVID-19, it is best for parent and baby to remain together. Isolation of you or your newborn will only be required if symptom severity requires it.
- Your baby will also be tested for COVID-19 if you are confirmed positive at the time you give birth.
- The new parent is recommended to wear a mask and observe strict hand hygiene for breastfeeding and skin-to-skin contact.
- Breastfeeding is very much encouraged with COVID-19 due to the immunologic properties of breast milk - your baby will receive direct antibodies to any current infections in the parent.
- Babies and children have all fared well with confirmed COVID-19 infection - there has been no severe cases reported so far in a child <10 years old.

As always, you can reach your midwife with urgent concerns by pager at 250-871-1414. If you have a question that is not urgent, but you would like an answer before your next scheduled visit, please call the clinic at 250-890-0832 or send an email to [office@plummidwifery.com](mailto:office@plummidwifery.com). Your midwives or our MOA will make every effort to respond promptly. We also encourage all clients to become familiar with the Resources Section of our [website](#). You will find lots of helpful information about things like managing stress and anxiety, maintaining your health during pregnancy and preparing for labour and birth from home. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we adjust to the increased workload due to the changing requirements and elevated concerns from our clients.

Wishing you continued health and calm during this trying time,

Your Plum Midwifery Team - *Sabrina, Yarra, Emma and Regula*