



# COVID-19 and Your Care at Plum Midwifery

Dear Plum client,

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 seemingly always changing and our 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 safely, we have made the following changes. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation!

## PRENATAL CARE SCHEDULE

We have adopted the following schedule of visits for your prenatal care. This schedule is recommended by the World Health Organization to provide safe care during a pandemic. All routine testing including blood work and 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 any questions about your upcoming appointment(s), feel free to contact our MOA Regula by phone or email.

- Visit 1: Between 0-12 weeks - by phone
- Visit 2: 12-16 weeks - in clinic
- Visit 3: 20 weeks - in clinic
- 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 have modified our schedule of postpartum visits. If you have a hospital birth, you may wish to stay in the hospital until 24 hours postpartum in order to complete your newborn's time sensitive tests and be seen by the midwife prior to discharge. If you have a home birth or choose early hospital discharge, your midwife will see you as soon as possible after 24 hours.

The postpartum schedule of visits is 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 - at home or in clinic

Visit 4: 3 weeks postpartum - in clinic

Visit 5: 6 weeks postpartum - in clinic

## PRENATAL AND POSTPARTUM GROUP CARE

- In-person prenatal group care and postpartum/baby groups have been suspended until further notice due to the current Public Health Order.
- We are currently offering 3 group prenatal education sessions in a rotating format on Thursdays on Zoom. These groups provide valuable information and resources as well as the opportunity to access peer-to-peer support. You will receive an email from Regula about this during your second trimester - please respond to the email to register if interested.
- If you have medical concerns or any questions come up that need to be addressed prior to your next appointment, please contact your midwives by phone, email or through the pager (only if urgent).

## ETIQUETTE/HYGIENE AT CLINIC AND HOME VISITS

- **Do not come to either of our clinics if you are having any signs of illness (fever, cough, increased mucous production, shortness of breath, sore throat, unusual fatigue or malaise, digestive distress such as vomiting or diarrhea).**
- Please inform your midwife if you or any of your family members (including children) 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. Please let us know if you feel you require additional support due to physical or mental health concerns.
- Please wash or sanitize your hands immediately on arrival to the clinic (both options are available). 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. Please be prepared with questions if possible.
- Postpartum assessment includes a baby weight check as well as a brief clinical assessment of both baby and parent. Please be prepared with questions if possible.
- If you need to speak with Regula before or after your appointment, please observe appropriate physical distancing (follow the markings on the floor).
- Wash your hands again and return to your vehicle.
- Your midwife will be wearing a mask and any other currently recommended PPE during clinic and for home visits even if you are asymptomatic for COVID-19.
- Our preference for home visits is to see you and your baby in a separate room. If the other parent, support people or siblings need to or wish to participate, we request that they please observe physical distancing.

- In keeping with the current Public Health Order, **masks are required in indoor public spaces, this includes both of our clinic locations.** If you do not have a mask, we are happy to provide one.

## COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AND CARE

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

<https://www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/covid-19>

If you believe you have COVID-19 symptoms, it is currently recommended for pregnant people with symptoms to have PCR testing. Call 1-844-901-8442 between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. daily. Be sure to self-identify as pregnant when you call to book a test.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include the following:

- Currently the most common presentation is a mild respiratory illness - this may include fever, dry cough, unusual fatigue, thick mucous especially when coughing, shortness of breath, sore throat, headache
- Less commonly, gastrointestinal symptoms may be present - diarrhea or vomiting

Pregnancy-specific considerations:

- Pregnant people are not more susceptible to contracting coronavirus, however they are at a **higher risk of complications and/or hospitalization** should they develop COVID-19 in pregnancy
- The vast majority of pregnant people infected with coronavirus will develop mild to moderate cold or flu-like symptoms which are able to be managed at home (>80%)
- Pregnant people with mild to moderate symptoms should stay home, treat symptoms as needed (contact your midwife if unsure of safe options) and follow isolation guidelines provided by the local public health authority
- Pregnant people should stay out of the hospital unless they are in need of urgent diagnostic testing or medical/obstetrical assessment or care
- **If you have suspected or confirmed COVID-19 at any time during your pregnancy, please inform your midwife right away. We can refer you for PCR testing, we will provide guidance for self-care at home and we will arrange increased follow-up for you or your baby (ie. ultrasound, NST and changes to birth care recommendations).**

## 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.
- Currently two support people are allowed with you during labour, birth and the immediate postpartum and they must not have any symptoms of illness. Your partner or primary support person is exempt from current proof of vaccination requirements for hospital visitation. **Secondary support people or visitors will be asked to show proof of vaccination.**
- *Doulas must show proof of vaccination to attend your birth as they are considered part of the care team.*
- After the immediate postpartum (~4 hours), you may have up to 2 visitors at a time. These people will be screened by ambassadors or administrative staff and **will be asked to provide proof of vaccination and may be denied entry to the hospital.** We kindly ask that you limit visitors as much as possible until you are discharged home.
- We are strongly encouraging sibling meetings to take place once you have been discharged home. If you have child care concerns please share these with your care team.
- Please call ahead to the unit at 250-331-5968 if you have symptoms of illness and are coming in during labour or for another type of assessment (ie. NST).
- Your entire care team will wear the currently recommended PPE when providing care to you in labour or the postpartum period to protect you against possible transmission.
- Your midwife will wear full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including gown, mask and eye protection when delivering your baby.
- **Masks are required at all times in the presence of staff and in common areas ie. hallways. The only exception is for the labouring/birthing parent.**

### Home Birth

- Home birth is still an option for low-risk clients at this time.
- **If you tested positive for COVID-19 at any time during your pregnancy, a hospital birth with continuous electronic fetal monitoring is recommended.**
- Please limit your labour support people as much as possible. 1-2 people is preferable but we may allow more provided they have no symptoms of illness, strict hand hygiene is used by all and physical distancing is observed wherever possible.
- If you or any of your family members are sick at the time of your labour (including your older children) we will need to recommend a hospital birth in order to protect your midwives and our other clients.
- Your entire care team will wear a mask when providing care to you in labour or the postpartum period to protect you against possible transmission.
- **We request that all support people wear masks during your labour unless strict physical distancing can be observed.**
- Your midwife will wear the currently recommended Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when delivering your baby.

## COVID-19 AND YOUR BABY

- Even if the birthing person is suspected or positive for COVID-19, evidence suggests it is best for parent and baby to remain together. Isolation of you or your newborn will only be required if the severity of your symptoms require it.
- The current recommendation is to test your baby for COVID-19 if you were positive during the 10-20 days before your birth, as well as to send your placenta to pathology for evaluation and research.
- If you test positive for COVID-19 at the time of your birth, it 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.
- Fortunately, babies and children have fared well with confirmed COVID-19 infection - so far there has been no severe cases reported in *otherwise healthy* newborns or young children.

## COVID-19 VACCINATION IN PREGNANCY + POSTPARTUM

- **Pregnant people are currently considered a priority population for COVID-19 vaccination including booster shots.** Vaccination against COVID-19 is **strongly recommended** during pregnancy as evidence shows it reduces adverse outcomes for you and your baby.
- To book your vaccine, you can register at [gov.bc.ca/getvaccinated](https://gov.bc.ca/getvaccinated) if you have not done so already, then phone 1-833-838-2323 and self-identify as being pregnant.
- Please review the following two documents for evidence-based, Canadian information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine during the childbearing/postpartum time:
  - [SOGC Statement on COVID-19 Vaccination in Pregnancy](#)
  - [BCCDC COVID-19 Vaccine in Pregnancy or Breastfeeding](#)
- If you have individual concerns or questions about your choice to receive the COVID-19 vaccine during your prenatal or postpartum care, please speak with your midwife and/or your family doctor.

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 during clinic hours or send an email to [office@plummidwifery.com](mailto:office@plummidwifery.com). Your midwives or our MOA Regula 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, Carla, Christy and Regula*