



# 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.

## PREGNATAL 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 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 or Zoom videoconference
- Visit 2: 12-16 weeks - in clinic
- Visit 3: 20 weeks - by phone or Zoom videoconference
- 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 - at home if needed, or in clinic

Visit 4: 3 weeks postpartum - in clinic

Visit 5: 6 weeks postpartum - in clinic

## PREGNATAL AND POSTPARTUM GROUP CARE

- All in-person prenatal group care and postpartum/baby groups have been suspended until further notice.
- We are offering 6 group prenatal education sessions in a rotating format on alternating Thursdays from 1-3pm on Zoom. Please register by email with Regula for the prenatal group.
- We are offering a drop-in postpartum support group on a biweekly basis from 1-3pm on Zoom. Please contact Regula for the Meeting ID and feel free to log in anytime in this window.
- Sessions will be hosted by local doula and lactation counsellor Pamela Tessman and are also meant to provide peer-to-peer support.
- If you have medical concerns or questions that need to be addressed prior to your next appointment, please contact your midwives by phone, email or through the pager if urgent.

## ETIQUETTE/HYGIENE AT CLINIC AND HOME VISITS

- Do not come to 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 have any of these signs of illness for a planned home visit or home 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 your questions and organize necessary testing over the phone to limit your time in the clinic, then have you come inside for a brief clinical assessment.
- Wash or sanitize 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.
- If you need to speak with Regula before or after your appointment, please observe appropriate physical distancing.

- Wash your hands again and return to your vehicle.
- Your midwife will be wearing a mask in clinic and 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 need to or wish to participate, we will require that physical 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%)
- Less commonly, 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 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. We can refer you for testing, we will provide guidance for self-care at home and we 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.
- Two support people are allowed with you during labour, birth and the immediate postpartum and they must not have any symptoms of illness. After the immediate postpartum, you may have one support person at a time. Your 1-2 support people must remain the same during your entire stay.
- No non-essential visitors during your entire hospital stay. This includes siblings.
- 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. Your midwife will discuss this with you in labour and the decision to get an epidural ultimately rests with the birthing person.
- 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.
- Your midwife will wear full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including gown, mask and face shield when delivering your baby.

### **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 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 whenever possible.
- If any of your family members are sick (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.
- Your midwife will wear full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including gown, mask and face shield 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 symptom severity requires it.
- Your baby will also be tested for COVID-19 if you are confirmed positive at the time you give birth.
- If positive at the time of birth, the birthing parent is recommended to wear a mask and observe strict hand hygiene for breastfeeding and all 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 in newborns or young children.

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 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 and Regula*