

# Scope of Practice: What do midwives do?



The Midwifery Act came into effect in Nova Scotia on March 18, 2009, giving women in Nova Scotia access to publicly-funded midwifery services. South Shore Health is pleased to be one of three model sites integrating midwives with our existing primary maternity care teams. The aims for midwifery care include:

- to give women choice
- to provide continuity of care
- to offer a choice of birthplace, as midwives are educated and trained to deliver safely in the hospital as well as at home
- to promote practices that support normal, natural birth

Midwives are trained professionals who are considered experts in normal pregnancy and birth. They must complete a four-year university program and register with their provincial regulatory body to legally practice midwifery in Nova Scotia. They will work closely with the obstetrics clinic, family physicians, nurse practitioners, obstetricians, nurses and other care providers as necessary to enhance the maternity care provided on the South Shore. Below are some examples of the skills and responsibilities of registered midwives in Nova Scotia.

Midwives are trained professionals who are considered specialists in normal pregnancy and birth. Midwives provide a wide range of services including:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prenatal care</li> <li>• counseling, education and support</li> <li>• continuous support, assessment and monitoring during the labour, birth and early postpartum</li> <li>• delivery of the baby</li> <li>• comprehensive newborn exams</li> <li>• breastfeeding support</li> <li>• extensive follow-up care after the birth including frequent home visits</li> </ul>
Midwives collaborate with other health care professionals.	Midwives are trained to detect problems and identify conditions that require consultation with or referral to other health care providers. When care is transferred to a doctor or other health care professional, midwives continue to provide supportive care.
Midwives maintain certification in emergency skills including:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• obstetric emergencies, CPR</li> <li>• neonatal resuscitation, including intubation</li> </ul>
Midwives prescribe and administer drugs as specified in Midwifery Regulations.	Midwives' pharmacopeia is limited to drugs used in the course of routine care, and in specific emergency situations.
Midwives order and interpret screening and diagnostic tests including:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• blood and urine tests, STI screening, PAP tests</li> <li>• genetic screening</li> <li>• ultrasound</li> <li>• neonatal metabolic screening</li> </ul>
Midwives carry all essential emergency equipment to home births including:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fetal and maternal assessment equipment</li> <li>• resuscitation equipment (oxygen, suction etc)</li> <li>• suturing supplies</li> <li>• IV supplies</li> </ul>

