



FAMILY-CENTRED PREGNANCY EXPERIENCE

Women who receive early and regular prenatal care generally have better outcomes.

Not everyone in Canada has equal access to prenatal care. Women—including many Indigenous women and their families, as well as those women and their families living in rural or remote areas of the country—may not always have access to health care providers (HCPs) who are trained in the provision of prenatal care.

HCPs recognize that pregnancy is a state of health and a normal physiological event—as well as a profound event in the life of a woman and her family. All care should be based on the unique needs of each woman and her family.

Key family-centred care recommendations:

- Welcome the woman's support persons and acknowledge them at all points of care.
- Communicate using language based on respect, inclusion, and acceptance.
- Shared decision-making is based on the principle that the woman's self-determination is an essential component of her care and is a process that requires collaboration between families and HCPs. Take the time to determine the unique personal, psychosocial, educational, physical, spiritual, and cultural needs of the woman and her family.
- Be aware of the influence of culture on the unique needs, hopes, and expectations that women have during pregnancy. Each family is unique; they adapt their cultural traditions and practices to their own experience and needs and they interpret the culture of health care within this context. HCPs will want to be aware of this and assess each situation individually.
- Every effort should be made to provide women with continuity of care from the same HCP or team. By asking women about their questions, concerns and current needs at each prenatal visit, and documenting this information, HCP's can help ensure continuity of care when other HCPs are involved prenatally or during labour and birth.
- The location and organization of prenatal care can be a critical factor in determining whether women choose (or are able) to access services. Services need to be located and organized in such a way to minimize barriers to care.

For references consult **Chapter 3: Care during Pregnancy** in: Public Health Agency of Canada. Family-Centred Maternity and Newborn Care: National Guidelines. Ottawa (ON): PHAC; 2019.

For more information about the **Family-Centred Maternity and Newborn Care: National Guidelines**, or to download this document, please search “maternity and newborn care” on **CANADA.CA**.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada