

Additional Homebirth Informed Choice during Covid-19 Pandemic

Dear Clients of Ocean Grove Midwifery Collective Midwives,

We look forward to providing care to you during your labour and birth. Many clients previously planning a hospital birth are now considering homebirth in the interest of staying away from the hospital and preventing possible exposure to Covid-19. We are happy to support you in making this decision and have a few items we would like to clarify during this time.

- 1) Please take the time to have an informed choice discussion with your midwife regarding the benefits and risks of home birth and hospital birth.
- 2) Read the College of Midwives of BC document: Place of Birth Handbook www.cmbc.bc.ca/publications/planned-place-of-birth-handbook/
- 3) Please sign the homebirth consent form.
- 4) In order to protect ourselves and other clients, we have created the following guidelines for homebirth at this time. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.
 - a) Only 1-2 support people present in the home. (ie. Partner and doula/family member)
 - b) You and support people are expected to have been strictly adhering to social distancing and be in good health. We will ask some screening questions before attending you in your home. If you or anyone in the home has been sick, travelling outside of Canada or had recent contact with a known or suspected Covid-19 case then we will need to provide care in hospital.
 - c) Your midwives need to wear appropriate PPE for your delivery. Expect us to arrive wearing scrubs and a surgical mask. When you are pushing we will also be wearing gowns and protective eyewear. This may seem odd if you are healthy but it is important for infection prevention. Everything we wear will be new or cleaned and sanitized. We will also need to wear our shoes in your home. There have been national shortages of PPE for healthcare workers. If we are unable to obtain appropriate protective gear because of such shortages, we will need to provide care in the hospital.
 - d) We will disinfect all of our equipment thoroughly to the best of our ability after each home delivery.
 - e) There may be times that we are unable to provide care at your home if a second midwife is not available or if “man”power is limited due to illness or multiple clients in labour.
 - f) We rely on the hospital sterilization department to clean and sterilize our instruments. If there is a delay in providing sterile instruments due to high demand, we cannot safely deliver your baby at home.
 - g) Covid-19 has created extra demands on our medical system. This could have implications on the safety of homebirth that do not exist under normal circumstances. For instance, in the event of an emergency and need for ambulance transfer to the hospital, there could be delays if paramedics are unavailable due to other emergent calls. Should your midwife

become aware of limitations within our usual emergency back-up system, she may recommend delivering your baby in the hospital.

- h) Policies have been changing daily within our hospital, health authority, province and regulatory bodies in response to the pandemic. There may be changes in policy or recommended safe practice that occur suddenly that affect your birth plan.

We recognize that giving birth during this pandemic may bring up fear, anxiety, sadness, grief or disappointment. Our goal is to help you to be able to celebrate this very special moment while providing safe care so that you and your baby can have a healthy and joyous birth experience despite all of the unexpected. We appreciate your understanding that we will do our best to help you achieve a home birth and yet we cannot guarantee that will be possible at the time you are in labour. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have with your midwife team.

I have read the above information and had an opportunity to ask any questions I might have. I agree to the terms outlined in this document.

Signed _____

Witness _____

Date _____