



GIVING BIRTH IN A NEW LAND

A guide for women new
to Canada and their families

Part 1 – Getting the help you need

You are pregnant. Congratulations!

This resource will help you learn more about having a baby in Canada. The way things happen here may be different from the country you came from. This resource focuses on Ontario.

There are 4 parts to this resource. This is part 1 of 4. All the parts can be downloaded at www.beststart.org/resources/rep_health.

Make sure you have access to the information you need.

- **Part 1: Getting the help you need**
- Part 2: Finding the health care you need during pregnancy
- Part 3: Getting ready for your baby
- Part 4: Having your baby

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You may need help during your pregnancy and after your baby is born. In your home country, your family and friends may have helped.

Although you may not have as many family and friends in Canada, there are many other ways to get the help you need.

Your partner

If you have a husband or partner, they can help you during pregnancy and they can help care for your baby. This is even more important if you do not have other family here to help you. It is good for them to be aware of services for pregnant women in case you or your baby needs to use these services. They can also learn to take care of the baby to give you a rest. This will help them know the baby.

There are many ways partners and fathers can help with the baby. These include changing diapers, holding the baby and playing with the baby. They can also help you by cooking meals, shopping for groceries or doing housework. Before the baby is born, you can discuss what each of you will do to care for your baby.



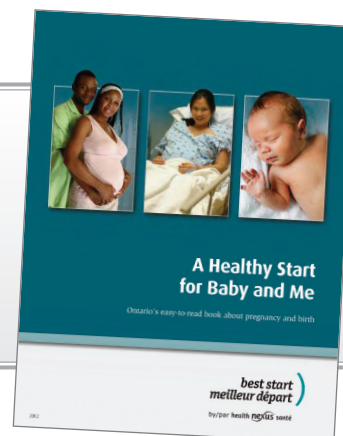
Public Health Units

All areas of Ontario are serviced by a Public Health Unit. They provide many programs and services to help women and their families have healthy pregnancies and healthy babies. To find the Public Health Unit in your area, visit www.phdapps.health.gov.on.ca/PHULocator/ and type in your postal code or city. You can also call the **INFOLine** at 1-866-532-3161.

Other people in your life

- It is good to have many people who can help you after the baby is born. You may have family members who live nearby and this will be helpful.
- If you do not know many people in your area, try to meet some while you are pregnant. There are many cultural groups, especially in large cities. For a list of cultural organizations, contact the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (see page 5).
- Programs in Ontario include the **Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program**, the **Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program** and the **Ontario Early Years Centres**. The people who work at these programs can help you find the services you need in your area. To find out about these programs, contact your local public health unit and ask to speak to a nurse (see text box above).
- It is very useful to make friends with people who have lived in Canada for a long time. They can help you understand the local practices better. You can meet other parents and pregnant women at drop-in programs.
- Most hospitals have a social worker who can help you find services in your area. Your health care provider can refer you to this person.
- Ask for help when you need it, even if you just want to talk to someone.
You are not alone!

The book *A Healthy Start for Baby and Me* will provide you with details on health before pregnancy, health during pregnancy, and healthy childbirth. You may be able to get a copy from your local public health unit or you can download it from www.beststart.org/resources/rep_health.



What about language?

If you do not speak English or French, you may find it hard to use some of the services available.

- Interpreters are on hand at some places, such as large hospitals. Sometimes this service is free. Ask if they provide this service and if there is a cost.
- If there are no interpreters that work in your language, you may choose to go to your appointments with a friend or a family member you feel comfortable with. They can help you talk with your health care provider.
- If you have a medical problem or are sick, you can call **Telehealth Ontario** (1-866-797-0000) and ask for an interpreter to help you talk to a nurse. You do not need an Ontario Health Card or insurance to use this service. It is free.
- Most settlement agencies provide help with interpretation. To learn more and to find local contacts, see www.settlement.org, under “Services Near Me.”



IMPORTANT SERVICES DURING PREGNANCY AND AFTER THE BABY IS BORN

- **211 Community Information Centres.** In larger centres in Ontario, the phone number 2-1-1 will help you get community, social, health and other government services. There is no charge for using this service. The website www.211ontario.ca has a list of communities in Ontario that offer this service. Or you can just dial 2-1-1 on your phone to see if you will be linked to the service.
- **911 Emergency Service.** If you are having a life-threatening emergency, you can dial 9-1-1 to call an ambulance, police, or firefighters. The service is available in many languages.
- **Assaulted Women's Help Line.** This free phone service is available 24 hours a day for women who are facing emotional or physical abuse. It is anonymous and private. They offer service in 150 languages. (1-866-863-0511; www.awhl.org)
- **Association of Ontario Midwives.** The website describes the role of a midwife and will help you find a midwife in your area. (1-866-418-3773; www.aom.on.ca)
- **Citizenship and Immigration Canada.** This federal government department assists people who want to immigrate and newcomers to Canada. Services include immigration, citizenship registration, and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC). (1-888-242-2100; www.cic.gc.ca)
- **Community Health Centres.** Many parts of Ontario have a community health centre. They generally provide health care and health promotion services. The staff consists of doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, health promoters, community health workers, and other health professionals. The service is free but you will need to pay for tests if you do not have an Ontario Health Card or private health insurance. You will need to find out if you live in a neighbourhood that has this service since they only serve people who live in their area. A list of community health centres is available. (www.ontariochc.org)
- **Motherisk.** A program of the Hospital for Sick Children (in Toronto). This free service focuses on the safety of medications, products, and environmental exposures for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding. (1-877-327-4636; www.motherisk.org)
- **Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants.** This non-profit organization has a list of member groups that represent many ethnic and cultural groups. (416-322-4950; www.ocasi.org)
- **Ontario Early Years Centres.** These are places where parents and caregivers can go with their children to take different programs and do some activities. Parents can get answers to questions they may have by talking to professionals, other parents, and caregivers in the community. You can call 1-866-821-7770 to find the location of the Ontario Early Years Centre closest to you. This service is free. (www.ontario.ca/earlyyears)

- **Ontario Human Rights Commission.** This organization administers the Ontario Human Rights Code, which protects people in Ontario against discrimination. (1-800-387-9080; www.ohrc.on.ca)
- **Ontario Immigration.** An Ontario Government website designed for potential and new immigrants to Ontario. (www.ontarioimmigration.ca)
- **Public Health.** All parts of Ontario are serviced by a public health unit. They provide many programs and services to help women and their families have healthy pregnancies and healthy babies. The Public Health Nurses and Home Visitors will provide advice and help you find the services you need. You can ask them if there is a Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program in your area. Most of their services are free, but you may need to pay for some services such as prenatal classes. In some cases, there is no fee for prenatal classes for low-income women. (www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx)
- **Service Canada.** Service Canada is a central service for all Government of Canada services. (1-800-O-Canada; 1-800-622-6232; www.servicecanada.gc.ca)
- **Service Ontario.** Service Ontario is a central service for all Government of Ontario services. (1-800-267-8097; www.serviceontario.ca)
- **Settlement.org.** This website is part of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants. It offers information in more than 30 languages as well as links to resources across the province, such as Newcomer Information Centres. (www.settlement.org)
- **Telehealth Ontario.** Telehealth Ontario is provided by the Government of Ontario and is free to all users. You do not need an Ontario Health Insurance number to talk to a Telehealth Ontario nurse. Call 1-866-797-0000. Service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is provided in English and French, with translation support for other languages.

A call to Telehealth Ontario does not replace 911 – that’s always the first number you should call in emergency situations.

- **Thehealthline.ca.** This website can help you find all health and community services in your area. (www.thehealthline.ca)

www.beststart.org

This document has been prepared with funds provided by the Government of Ontario. The information herein reflects the views of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Ontario. The resources and programs cited throughout this guide are not necessarily endorsed by the Best Start Resource Centre or the Government of Ontario.