

A Labour of Love: A West Coast Birthing Guide



Getting Started

Congratulations! You are creating a family on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. Our eight communities of Ahousaht, ACRD, District of Tofino, District of Ucluelet, Hesquiaht First Nation, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, Toquaht First Nation, and Yuuʷuʷiʔath inhabit a beautiful land of rugged ocean, temperate rain forest and an eclectic mix of dwellers. It takes a certain person to call this location home and create a family. We are here to help along your journey.

Have you connected with your primary care provider, either your **family doctor** or your **registered midwife**? Your family doctor and/or your registered midwife will assist you in your pregnancy until you leave your community to give birth.

Thinking ahead can help reduce stress. Don't be afraid to ask your family doctor and/or your registered midwife, public health nurse or community health nurse any questions.

Register with [Right from the Start](#) Prenatal Programs to assure that you are receiving services that are appropriate for your needs.

Doctor's Offices

Hesquiaht Health Clinic: 250-670-1100

Ahousaht Clinic: 250-670-2509

Tonquin Medical Clinic: 250-725-3282

Ucluelet Medical Clinic: 250-726-4443

Island Health Public Health Nurse

Tofino: 250-725-4020

Ucluelet: 250-726-2224

NTC Community Health Nurse

NTC Central Regional: 250-725-3367

Hesquiaht: 250-670-1104

Ahousaht: 250-670-9608

Esowista & Opitsaht: 250-725-1232

Ittatsoo: 250-726-2993

Toquaht: 250-726-4230



Registered Midwife

Are you thinking of a registered midwife? Remember to start your interview process & book someone sooner than later. Check if they have hospital privileges. [Midwives Association of British Columbia](#)

Non-Medical Support: Doula

A doula is someone who provides non-medical support to women and their families during labour and childbirth, and also the postpartum period. [Doula Services Association](#)

Hospitals

Your family doctor and/or registered midwife will work with you to determine who your care providers will be at the hospital of your choice.

Look into maternity information at the hospital. Is there an orientation package? Does the hospital have privileges for midwives? Cafeteria hours? Parking costs? What pharmacies or stores are nearby? Use [google maps](#) and have a walk-about.

West Coast General Hospital

3949 Port Alberni Highway
Port Alberni, BC V9Y 4S1
250-731-1370

St. Joseph's General Hospital

2137 Comox Ave
Comox, BC V9M 1P2
250-339-2242

www.sighcomox.ca/maternity.php

Cowichan District Hospital

3045 Gibbins Road
Duncan, BC V9L 1E5
250-709-3000

Nanaimo Regional General Hospital

1200 Dufferin Crescent
Nanaimo, BC V9S 2B7
250-755-7691

Victoria General Hospital

1 Hospital Way
Victoria, BC V8Z 6R5
250-727-4212

Vancouver General Hospital

899 12th Avenue West
Vancouver BC V5Z 1M9
604-875-4111

Public Health Units

Port Alberni Health Unit: 250-731-1315

Nanaimo Public Health Unit: 250-755-3342

Prenatal Services

[Right from the Start](#)

[Family Ties Program](#)

Prenatal/Postnatal Education & Support – Pregnancy Outreach Program

Tofino: 250-725-4020 ext. 64183

Ucluelet: 250-726-2224

This program is supported by Island Health and Nuu-cha-nulth Tribal Council. This program is further supported by registered nurses, dieticians, dental hygienists and pregnancy outreach workers.

Prenatal Classes

Prenatal classes are held 3 times per year on the west coast, during the last week of January, May and September. For more information, please call **Island Health Public Health Services:** 250-725-4020



Leaving Town

Ask your primary care provider what tests you will need to travel out of town for in each trimester (i.e. ultrasounds). It is okay to ask for an explanation of each test and discuss with your doctor if they are necessary. Work with your primary care provider to decide on the most appropriate time to leave your community to have your baby.

Helpful Questions

- Do you have someone checking your house and your mail?
- Are the bills up to date?
- Do you have someone looking after your pet(s)? Are you taking your pet(s) with you?
- Who is your emergency contact person?
- Did you pack your identification, health card, and paperwork?
- Do you have your vitamins or prescriptions?
- When will your partner leave their community to join you?
- Have you booked accommodation?
- Did you pack your baby bag?
- Do you have a car seat to bring your baby home in?
- If you are using public transportation, where does the bus drop you off? Are there taxis nearby? What is the telephone number for the taxi?

Accommodation & Travel

Talk to your primary care provider about the best time to relocate prior to your due date.

Research the terms of your rental, whether it's booked monthly, weekly, or daily and if you can extend your stay if needed. Consider the location and if it is close to the hospital or bus routes. Think about the amenities you require and if they are nearby. If you have a pet that you want to bring with you, ensure the accommodation is pet friendly.

[Vancouver Island Health Authority has a helpful travel and accommodation page.](#)

The [BC Ministry of Health's Travel Assistance Program](#) provides financial assistance for traveling for medical reasons. **1-800-661-2668 (24 hours a day)**

Finances

Check [Service Canada](#) to see if you or your spouse qualifies for maternity or paternity coverage. This website will also provide information about parental employment insurance. ***It may be helpful to keep a journal of your travel receipts to claim for tax purposes.***

Employment Insurance: 1-800-206-7218

Enquiry BC: 1-800-663-7867

Service BC: 250-726-7025

First Nations Non Insured Health Benefits Program: Check with your local Administration, as each Nation is unique.

Medical Service Plan: 1-800-663-7100

Useful Resources

[Westcoast Community Resource Society](#)

[Health Link BC](#)

[Healthy Families BC](#)

[Babies Best Chance](#)

[Island Health Authority Pregnancy Info](#)

[Midwives Association of British Columbia](#)

[Doula Services Association](#)

[Le Leche League](#)

Nurses Hot Line 8-1-1

Local Resources

[Right from the Start](#)

[Family Ties Program](#)

[Westcoast Community Resource Society](#)

[Coastal Family Resources Coalition](#)

Family Ties Prenatal/Postnatal Education & Support:

Tofino: 250-725-4020 ext. 64183

Ucluelet: 250-726-2224

Coming Home

Your family doctor will resume care of you and your newborn once you are home. An Island Health Public Health Nurse or an NTC Community Health Nurse will also be in touch to support you and your baby in transitioning from hospital to home.

It is recommended that you follow-up with your primary care provider within the first week of arriving home and also again at 6 weeks after arriving home.

If you are being released on a Friday or weekend make sure you have family and friends to help support you through the weekend.

If you are using a midwife remember to discuss a follow-up plan. How are you going to connect, phone, skype, or internet?

The journey home is a long trip for your newborn. Remember to take frequent stops to rest, feed baby and yourself, and stay hydrated.

