



MIDWIFE

JOB DESCRIPTION

A midwife specializes in supporting and protecting the health of a mother-to-be and her baby during pregnancy, childbirth, and the baby's first weeks of life. They may also offer other health care services for women, such as exams and prescriptions counseling. In this role, you will advise and assist women and their families with the emotional and practical issues associated with pregnancy, labor, and newborn care.



SALARY

Newly qualified midwife ★★☆☆☆

Consultant midwife ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Many vacancies across the world • Demand for midwives growing as birth rates rise • Regulated profession with positions available in hospitals and in the community

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Women's health and welfare • Health and social service • Biology • Science • Mathematics • Social sciences • English



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS Professional midwives must have degrees in nursing, midwifery, or both. Requirements vary based on the type of certification.



LIFESTYLE Due to the unpredictable nature of childbirth, midwives work in shifts. Community-based midwives must be on call in case of emergency.



LOCATION Midwives work in hospital wards, community health centers, or birthing units. Community-based midwives may visit parents at home.



THE REALITIES Pregnancy and labor can involve medical complications and emergencies, which can be emotionally stressful. Shift work can be tiring.

▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **COUNSELOR** *see pp. 256–257*
- ▶ **HEALTH VISITOR** Visits patients in their homes to provide care following surgery, after childbirth, or for a range of other health issues.
- ▶ **NEONATAL NURSE** Provides nursing care for newborn babies who are premature or sick. Neonatal nurses work in special units in hospitals.
- ▶ **PEDIATRIC NURSE** Provides health care to children of all ages in hospitals, care homes, and schools. Pediatric nurses have to work closely with parents.
- ▶ **SONOGRAPHER** Uses ultrasound to examine unborn babies, checking their development and screening them for medical conditions.

There are more than 15,000 practicing midwives in the United States.

CAREER PATHS

Midwifery offers opportunities for working in a range of settings around the world. Midwives may be based in hospitals, maternity clinics, midwife units, and birth centers, or even make home visits.

NURSE You can earn a nursing degree, then specialize in midwifery by undertaking on-the-job training after you have qualified as a nurse.



GRADUATE A good level of education and work experience will help you when applying for a midwifery degree, which is the usual route of entry into the job.



MIDWIFE As a qualified midwife, you can work in a variety of settings or follow a number of specialized career paths. You can also choose to alternate between prenatal, delivery, and postnatal jobs.



SKILLS GUIDE

Good communication skills for interacting with patients from different backgrounds.



The ability to work with other health care professionals, such as doctors and health visitors.



Compassion and empathy for delivering care with sensitivity to expectant parents.



Persistence, a good sense of humor, and the ability to motivate patients and staff.



Physical strength to lift patients and equipment, and stamina to endure long hours and stress.

COMMUNITY-BASED MIDWIFE Runs clinics, refers cases to doctors when required, and cares for women in labor, especially those having home births.



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CLINICAL RESEARCHER Conducts clinical studies with the aim of improving the care of expectant mothers, procedures used in childbirth, and the treatment of children in their early months.



CONSULTANT MIDWIFE Provides specialized care in complicated deliveries, such as Caesarian sections, as well as helping to train new midwives. May also participate in research programs to assess and improve midwifery methods.



HOSPITAL MIDWIFE

Works in the prenatal, labor, and postnatal wards of hospitals to provide care to expectant and new mothers.



MIDWIFERY TEAM MANAGER Manages a team of midwives on a hospital maternity ward, combining hands-on duties with overseeing the work of other midwives.

