

# Patient, Caregiver and Family Guide to the Perinatal Quality Standard

August 2024



## The *Perinatal Quality Standard* was developed by Health Quality BC.

Health Quality BC's work leads to better health care for British Columbians. Using evidence-informed strategies, it advances person and family-centred care, shifts culture and improves clinical practice to support high-quality care for every person in the province. If you want to improve BC's health care system, visit [healthqualitybc.ca](https://healthqualitybc.ca) to access programs and resources that can help you start today.

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# About the Perinatal Quality Standard

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Quality standards are tools for helping our health care systems deliver consistent, high-quality care to support the health of patients and the population.

They describe key aspects of high-quality services for a condition or topic, focusing on specific areas where improvement can lead to better health outcomes.



# About the Perinatal Quality Standard

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The *Perinatal Quality Standard* was developed to advance high-quality perinatal care across British Columbia.

It features nine quality statements to guide improvement efforts where they are needed most. These future-focused statements serve as common goals to which the BC health care system can aspire.

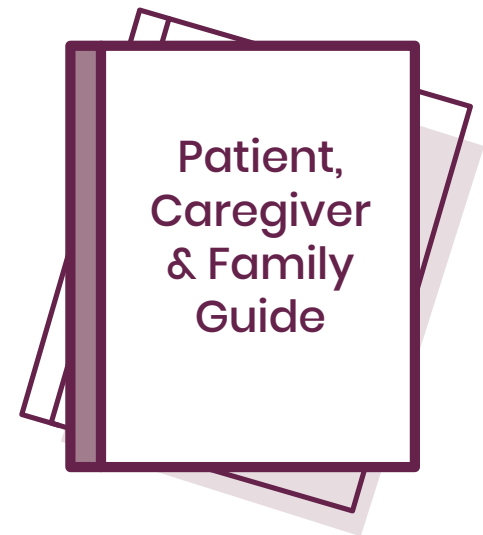
To see the *Perinatal Quality Standard*, go to [healthqualitybc.ca/improve-care/quality-standards/perinatal-quality-standard](https://healthqualitybc.ca/improve-care/quality-standards/perinatal-quality-standard).

# About this guide

*The Patient, Caregiver and Family Guide to the Perinatal Quality Standard* has been developed as a helpful resource for pregnant people, as well as friends and family members who are involved as caregivers.

It describes key aspects of high-quality perinatal care for the **perinatal population**.

The **perinatal population** refers to pregnant people, newborns, and their family/chosen caregivers who are involved with and experience perinatal care throughout the patient journey.





This guide is for:

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## **Pregnant people**

If you are pregnant, the guide can help you understand your perinatal care and support you to make informed decisions in collaboration with your health care team.



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## **Caregivers and/or family members**

If you are a chosen caregiver or family member (relative, partner, friend, or member of the community), this guide will help you understand the care available and how you will be included.



# What are perinatal services?

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The **perinatal period** includes pregnancy, labour, birth, and the first few weeks after birth.

Perinatal services support the **perinatal population** throughout the **prenatal, antenatal,** and **postpartum** continuum. Services include access to health care professionals, community services, education, and physical and emotional support to help make healthy, safe choices during and after pregnancy.



# The quality statements

Quality statements focus on specific areas of the patient journey where improvement can lead to better health outcomes. They include indicators to measure progress and guide improvement work.

There are nine quality statements in this guide.



## Cross-continuum

### Quality Statement 1: Cultural Safety

The perinatal population experience a care journey in the health system that is free of racism, is respectful, and is inclusive of cultural practices.

#### What it means to you:

**Cultural safety** is an important concept in BC's health care system. Culturally safe health care services are free of racism and discrimination.

Your perinatal care should be professional and respectful. Preservation of your dignity and choice should be maintained throughout your entire care journey.



## Cross-continuum

### Quality Statement 1: Cultural Safety

The perinatal population experience a care journey in the health system that is free of racism, is respectful, and is inclusive of cultural practices.

#### What it means to you:

**Health care professionals** should demonstrate **cultural humility** in their interactions with you when they seek to engage with you in the spirit of reciprocity and in a way that respects your culture, circumstances, history, needs and preferences.



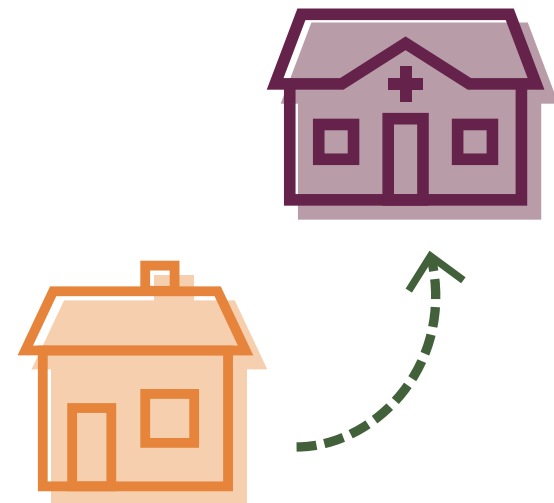
## Cross-continuum

### Quality Statement 2: Proximity of Services

The perinatal population experience care as close to home as safely possible.

#### What it means to you:

You receive clear communication and planning for where perinatal services can be safely provided depending on geography and care provider availability. You should be able to receive **antenatal** and **postnatal** care, either in person or virtually, in your home community.





## Cross-continuum

### Quality Statement 3: Shared Decision-Making

The perinatal population experience **shared decision-making** with the care team throughout the patient journey.

#### What it means to you:

You are a partner in decisions regarding your perinatal care with your care team. You are able to make informed decisions about your care.



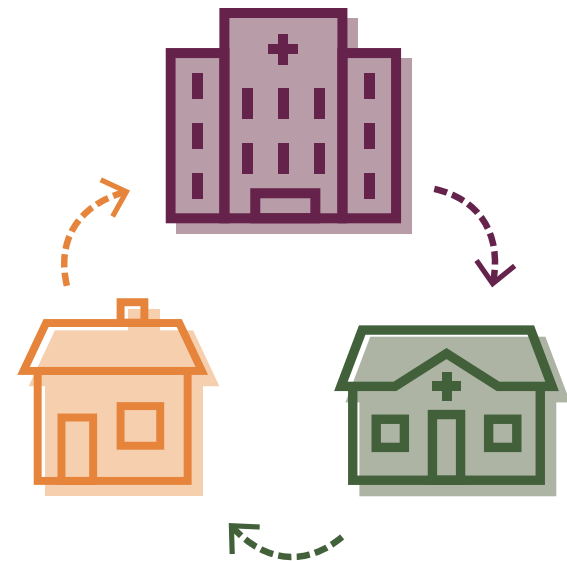
## Cross-continuum

### Quality Statement 4: Transitions in Care

The perinatal population experience **seamless transitions in care** throughout the patient journey.

#### What it means to you:

You are able to transition to different health care professionals, services, or communities during your perinatal care journey with access to your personal care information, and the right information is shared with the various health care professionals.



## Cross-continuum

### Quality Statement 5: Interprofessional Teams

The perinatal population are offered care by an **interprofessional primary perinatal care team.**

#### What it means to you:

You know who is part of your interprofessional primary perinatal care team. You understand the different roles health care professionals have in providing your perinatal care. You understand why you may need to access perinatal care away from your home community.



## Cross-continuum

### **Quality Statement 6: Evidence-Informed Care**

The perinatal population experience evidence-informed perinatal care to optimize vaginal births.

#### **What it means to you:**

In collaboration with a health care professional, you understand the risks and are supported to make an evidence-informed and appropriate decision regarding mode of birth.



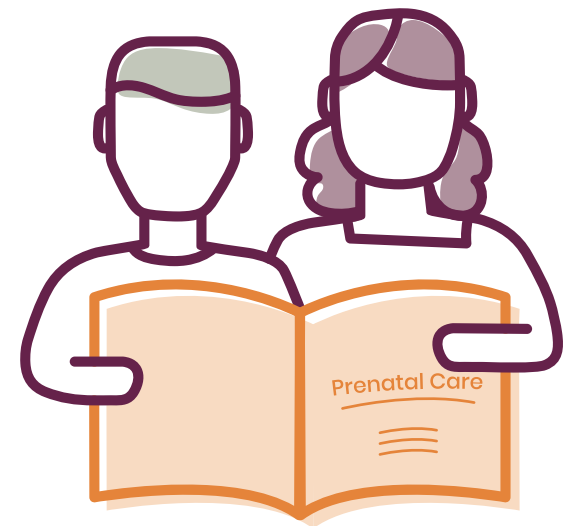
## Prenatal

### Quality Statement 7: Access to Education

The perinatal population have **access** to evidence-informed prenatal education.

#### What it means to you:

You are made aware of and know how to access reliable evidence-informed prenatal resources, tools, and education that include culturally appropriate information. You receive consistent information regardless of where you live in the province.



## Intrapartum

### Quality Statement 8: Safe Care

The perinatal population experience **intrapartum** care in a system where clinicians complete core courses to maintain safety, competence, and confidence.

#### What it means to you:

You have confidence, trust, and assurance that health care professionals in birthing sites are competent to provide safe perinatal care.



## Postpartum Cross-continuum

### Quality Statement 9: Follow-Up Care

The perinatal population experience care and follow-up within the first six weeks after birth.

#### What it means to you:

You are supported to have **skin-to-skin contact** with the newborn within the first hour after birth to support breast/chest feeding. You receive timely follow-up within the first six weeks after birth from a member of the **interprofessional primary perinatal care team** and understand who to contact with concerns and questions.



# Definitions



## **Access**

The ease with which health and wellness services are reached.<sup>3</sup>

## **Antenatal**

The period in pregnancy covering conception until birth.<sup>6</sup>

## **Cultural humility**

A process of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience.<sup>2</sup>

## **Cultural safety**

An outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the health care system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving health care.<sup>2</sup>

## **Health care professionals**

Health care professionals provide essential services to promote health, prevent diseases and deliver health care services based on the needs of the person.<sup>7</sup> Perinatal health care professionals include primary care physicians, midwives, nurses, obstetricians, pediatricians, and nurse practitioners.

## **Interprofessional primary perinatal care team**

Multiple health care professionals from different professional backgrounds work together and with patients, caregivers, and families to deliver comprehensive health services.<sup>8</sup>

## **Intrapartum**

The time spanning childbirth from labour to birth.

## **Perinatal period**

For the purposes of the *Perinatal Quality Standard*, perinatal is defined as the time from diagnosis of pregnancy to six weeks post birth, and neonates up to 28 days old.<sup>1</sup>

## **Perinatal population**

The perinatal population refers to pregnant people, newborns, and their family/chosen caregivers who are involved with and experience perinatal care throughout the patient journey.

## **Prenatal**

The time from diagnosis of pregnancy up to birth.

## **Postpartum / Postnatal**

The time following birth. For the purposes of the *Perinatal Quality Standard*, for patients this is for six weeks post birth and for neonates up to 28 days old.

## **Seamless Transition in Care**

A seamless transition in care means that health care professionals and organizations are accountable to ensure there are no preventable delays in receiving the necessary transport (away from and returning to home community).

## **Shared Decision-Making**

Shared decision-making is described as a partnership in which the patient and health care professional share the best available information and their respective values to make the best decisions with the patient.<sup>4,5</sup>

## **Skin-to-skin Contact**

Uninterrupted skin-to-skin care for at least the first hour (and continuing for as long as possible) provides numerous benefits to infants, including improved breastfeeding success.<sup>9</sup>

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