

Standard:	Guidelines for Fetal Health Surveillance
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GUIDELINES FOR FETAL HEALTH SURVEILLANCE IN LABOUR

For Midwives Practicing in Newfoundland and Labrador

Introduction

Fetal health surveillance is the general term for assessing fetal well-being during labour. Registered midwives are primary care providers who practice within their scope of practice, in hospitals and in the community. Midwives independently care for women during spontaneous labour and birth and are expected to assess the onset and progress of labour and provide the appropriate care. Midwives provide emotional and physical support to the woman in labour and to her support people. Information is provided to the woman throughout the course of labour so that the woman can participate in the decision-making process. Midwives are expected to use their best clinical judgment in assessing and responding to each woman's labour and incorporate appropriate monitoring of both maternal and fetal well-being. Midwives are required to have the knowledge and ability to competently assess the fetal heart rate both by auscultation using a fetoscope, or doppler and by electronic monitoring. Fetal health surveillance is only one aspect of the clinical picture and decisions about management should always be made in relation to the total clinical picture. The following guidelines should be used in combination with other documents of the College of Midwives, including *Indications for Consultation and Transfer of Care, Place of Birth, Emergency Transport, and Recording and Charting*.

Registered Midwives in Newfoundland and Labrador are expected to follow the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) *Fetal Health Surveillance: Antepartum and Intrapartum Consensus Guidelines (2007)*, or hospital policies if appropriate.

References

- Downe, S. (2009). The transition and the second stage of labour: Physiology and the role of the midwife. In D. M. Fraser, & M. A. Cooper (Eds.), *Myles textbook for midwives*. (15th ed., pp. 509-530). Toronto: Churchill Livingstone Elsevier.
- Johnson, R., & Taylor, W. (2010). *Skills for midwifery practice* (3rd ed.). Toronto: Churchill Livingstone Elsevier,
- Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. (2007). Fetal health surveillance. Antepartum and intrapartum consensus guideline. *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada*, 29(9), (Suppl. 4). http://www.sogc.org/guidelines/documents/gui197CPG0709r_000.pdf