

Today well over 5,000 nurse midwives practice in the United States, delivering over 200,000 babies a year. A certified nurse midwife is an accomplished health care professional specializing in the care of women throughout their life cycle, including the special times of pregnancy and birth. While many traditional doctors focus mainly on the mother-to-be when dispensing care advice, the basic philosophy of a midwife is that childbirth is a natural, physiological experience involving the entire family. Midwifery care emphasizes that birth is best assisted in a physically and emotionally supportive environment, discouraging any unnecessary medical interventions. Midwives encourage the involvement of the mother, her partner, and other family members when offering education about nutrition, exercise, and other healthy habits to best ensure the healthiest pregnancy and birth.

In the United States, most Certified Nurse Midwives must complete rigorous training through the approved programs of the American College of Nurse Midwives. In the United States, the number of Certified Nurse Midwives is increasing at an accelerated rate, and is estimated to be around 4,000. They are blazing trails in prenatal care, providing their services in hospitals, to low-income families, and are establishing themselves as an invaluable source of knowledge in many medical school programs by training residents about normal birth. Many Certified Nurse Midwives work together in group practices along with other Certified Nurse Midwives and/or physicians, but a few establish their own solo practice where they consult with a partnering physician if the need arises.

Most Certified Nurse Midwives are able to provide their patients with total care for women including: family planning, routine women's health exams (e.g. pap smears, physical exams), provide council about sexually transmitted diseases and prescribe medication. Midwives are qualified to provide a women's health care from puberty through menopause.