

The Midwifery and Well-Child Care Home Visiting System

Ástþóra Kristinsdóttir, Midwife specialist M.Sc, RN
Sesselja Guðmundsdóttir PNP, MSc, RN, Director of Well-Child Care
Development Centre for Primary Healthcare in Iceland (DCPHI)



The Midwifery Home visiting System

- Midwifery service - home visits after delivery started in Iceland 1994
- Around 80% percent of all mothers in Iceland use the service now
- The service is not part of actual Well-Child Care, but it is aligned with it, and often the **same midwife caring for the family in prenatal care offers home visits after birth**. Emphasis is on ensuring continuity and building trust with the family
- Midwives determine the number of home visits based on individual need and the length of time the mother and baby stayed in hospital after the child was born
- 1-7 visits for the first 10 days



Home visits by midwife after delivery in home of hospital

A primipara discharge from hospital within 36 hours. Normal delivery. Up to 6 visits for the first 10 days	Home visits after C-section, discharge within 48 hours. Up to 7 visits the first 10 days
A multipara discharge from hospital within 36 hours. Normal delivery. Up to 5 visits the first 10 days	Home visits after delivering twins, up to 7 visits
B discharge from hospital within 48hour. Up to 7 visits for the first 10 days	Home visits after stillborn delivery up to 7 visits the first 21 days
C discharge from hospital within 48-72 hours from delivery. Up to 7 visits the first 10 days	



The Midwifery Home Visiting System

- In some parts of the country, where women stay in hospital longer, they do not get this service. They have to discharge from hospital within 36 hours primipara and 24 hours if multipara to get this service
- The midwife offers support for breastfeeding and can refer the mother to a certified breastfeeding specialist (IBLCE) if major problems such as mastitis, issues with latching or sucking, sore, cracked or painful nipples
- Each mother can get three home visits from the breastfeeding specialist in the first six months free of charge. Nurses in Well-Child Care can also refer the mother to the breastfeeding specialist



The Midwifery Home Visiting System

- An emphasis is placed on delivering the home visits in an individualized way, meeting women and families with friendliness and respect
- A focus is placed on the mother's physical and psychological wellbeing and the life changes that a new baby brings to the family
- All infants are examined by a paediatrician five days after birth at the hospital and a Newborn Hearing Screening is done
- Prenatal Care and home visits after birth is free of charge for legal residents of Iceland



The Midwifery Home Visiting System – the midwives role

- Health education
- Parent–infant attachment, breastfeeding, maternal wellbeing, and family communication
- Checking how the mother is, physically and mentally and giving advice what to watch for; bleeding, breasts, checking the size of the uterus, contractions. Depression after birth, educate about normal blues after giving birth
- Midwives assess the wellbeing of the family and ask and see how they are doing in their new role. – relations difficulties?
- Look at the color of the baby, check their reflexes. Take bloodtest from the baby, PKU, and bilirubin if necessary



The Midwifery Home Visiting System – the midwives role

- See how the breastfeeding is going and if the baby is taking the breast right and getting enough nourishment. Teaching the mothers what to look after with their baby's behaviour. How parents can stimulate the baby
- Giving advice about parental skills. Teaching listening to the baby and learn how to understand the behaviour of the newborn
- Teaching the family how to clean and wash everything that the family needs - specially the baby bottles etc.
- Teaching the family to bath the baby and to take care of the umbilicus
- Parental emotional skills – talking about and how nessecary it is to get enough rest, food and sleep



Home visits in Well-Child Care

- The aim of Well-Child Care is to promote health, well-being and development of children from birth until the age of five
- The service is located in general primary healthcare centers
- Nurses and general practitioners (GPs) are the main professionals who manage Well-Child Care, along with paediatricians in some healthcare centers
- Families usually see the same professionals in Well-Child Visits. Emphasis is on ensuring continuity and building trust with the family
- Well-Child care is free of charge for legal residents of Iceland and all children are automatically registered into the system at birth
- Families are not obliged to accept the service but most of them do and invite nurses to their homes for home visits after birth



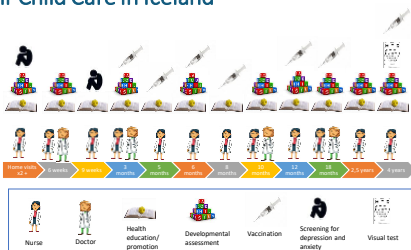
National Guidelines for Well-Child Care published by the Development Centre for Primary Healthcare in Iceland, in collaboration with the Directorate of Health
<http://throuarmidstod.is/svid-thih/ung-og-smabarnavernd/>

Home visits in Well-Child Care

- Home visits in Well-Child Care has a long history in Iceland
- Since 1994, the midwifery service visits families with newborns for the first 10 days after birth. Well-Child Care takes over the service once the midwifery service is over, when the child is 1-2 weeks old
- The first visits takes about an hour. After that, one or two home visits are offered over the next few weeks, and more if needed. Nurses evaluate each case and decide how many visits are needed
- During these visits nurses examine the child's growth and development, discuss how to improve care, prevent problems and provide support on how to take care of the child



Well-Child Care in Iceland



Home visits in Well-Child Care

- Health education / promotion

- Breastfeeding support
- Growth and development
- Parenting skills
- Accident prevention
- Parent-infant attachment
- Family circumstances and social difficulties
- Screening for depression and anxiety

HEILSUVERA.IS
 www.heilsuvera.is
 is a website with information about health issues



Home visits in Well-Child Care

- Screening for depression and anxiety

- The mental wellbeing of the new mother is a particular focus in both Prenatal and Well Child Care
- Standardized procedure for screening for depression and anxiety done in the first home visit in Well-Child Care. Spouses are screened if needed
 - Whooley questions – two questions
 - GAD-2 – two questions
 - If answers to these questions indicate a problem, then EPDS and GAD-7 are administered in full
- All mothers are screened for depression and anxiety with EPDS and GAD-7 in Prenatal Care (16 weeks) and also at the 9 week appointment in Well-Child Care



What we can do to improve the service

- There is a strong emphasis to improve collaboration between Prenatal Care, Midwifery Service, Well-Child Care and Social Services
- Support mothers own mental health being
- Prevention – maintain positive health in pregnancy and after birth
- CBT – cognitive-behavioral therapy if needed for parents before and after delivery, in many languages



Thank you 😊

