

What is a Doula?

The word Doula comes from the Greek and is now used to refer to a woman who helps other women. They are experienced women helping women through childbirth; providing physical, emotional and informational support before, during, and after childbirth.

A Birth Doula:

- Understands the birthing process has a long lasting impact on the mother, child and family.
- Understands the physiology of birth and emotional needs of the mother during labor.
- Assists a woman and her partner in preparing for and carrying out their plans for the birth.
- Stays by the side of the laboring mother throughout the entire Labor.
- Provides emotional support, physical comfort, objective view points, and assistance to the woman in getting information she needs to make informed decisions.
- Facilitates communications between the laboring woman, her partner, and clinical care providers.
- Perceives her role as one who nurtures and protects the woman's memory of her birth experience.

A Post-Partum Doula:

- Provides care to the family with a newborn baby and gives information about breastfeeding.
- Assisting the family with domestic chores that may be piling up.
- Listening to the family's questions or concerns and addressing any new fears.

How will a Doula affect my Birth?

Evidence from 25 studies shows in all, both mothers and babies had substantial reductions in complications and interventions. Reductions in need for:

- Cesarean sections
- Forceps
- Epidurals
- Narcotics
- Overall decrease in length of labor
- Perception of the birth post partum are more positive.
- Breastfeeding success is increased and less post partum depression is noted & reported.

What is Support?

Support is unconditional, it is listening... Not judging, not telling your own story. Support is not offering advice... It is offering a handkerchief, a touch, a hug... caring. We are here to help women discover what they are feeling... Not to make the feelings go away. We are here to help women identify the options... Not to tell her which options to choose. We are here to discuss steps with women... Not to take the steps for her. We are here to help women discover their strength... Not to rescue her and leave her vulnerable. We are here to help women discover they can help themselves... Not to take responsibility for her. We are here to help women learn to choose... Not to force her to make difficult choices. - Anonymous

For further information, contact your Naturopath, Midwife, or Doulas of North America (DONA) @

www.dona.com

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