



## Frequently Asked Questions about Doulas

### Q: What is Doula?

The word Doula comes from the ancient Greek language and the literal meaning of Doula is slave/servant, but here Doula means a woman who helps other women in childbirth and beyond. That is why we have a Birth Doula and the duties of a Doula in the past belonged to the women of a laboring mother's family.



### Q: Does a doula replace my birth partner?

A doula is there for the partner also. A birth doula does not replace the role of your chosen birthing partner. The role of the birth doula is to assist and support the mother and her partner in achieving their birthing goals. The birth doula works very closely with any other coach present, and uses her training to assist and empower the birth partner to be actively present during the labor and delivery. The birth doula remains focused on the needs of the mother even at the end of the birth when all other eyes turn to the baby being born.

### Q: At what stage of my pregnancy should I consider hiring a doula?

It is a good idea to start interviewing doulas at about 4 months pregnant. This gives you the opportunity to find a doula who fits with your personality and you feel comfortable with. Don't worry if you are further along in your pregnancy, we accept new clients right up to their due date unless the month is exceptionally busy.

### Q: Should I bring my partner with me?

Absolutely! We encourage you and your partner to meet your potential doula. You will want to find the right doula for both of your needs – one who fits your beliefs, desires, experience comfort level, and personality mesh.

### Q: What should I look for/ask when hiring/interviewing a doula?

Whatever you want to know about us. There are many sample questions on the web, but whatever it is you want to know about the particular doulas you are interviewing.

### Q: Do I need a doula if I want a hospital birth?

Definitely! Three words: continuity of care! The continued presence of a doula during labor significantly reduces cesarean delivery rates and the need for epidural analgesia in middle- and upper-class US women who choose hospital births. A doula is familiar with the policies, procedures, and services offered by area hospitals, enabling her to help families make educated decisions regarding these practices during their labors and births.

### Q: Do doulas only take clients who want to have a natural undedicated labor and delivery?

No, a doula is there to support her clients' wishes, what ever they may be.

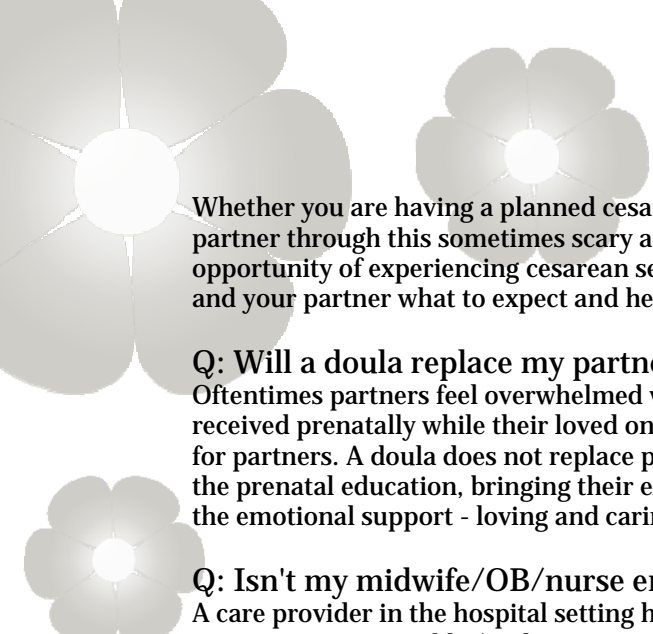
### Q: Do I need a doula if I want medication for birth?

A resounding yes! Doulas support women's choices, not a specific birth experience. A doula's presence creates an environment where women stay comfortable longer in their labors - causing many women to choose medication later in labor, which reduces risks during birth. And then, even after medication is chosen, a doula will be able to continue suggesting positions, watch vitals, encourage visualization, provide acupressure to move baby down - all with an epidural or IV medication in place.

### Q: Does a doula attend my birth if I have a cesarean section?

A doula will be by your side during labor, if a c-section is needed, depending on the hospital, the doula can join your partner in the O.R. If not, she can be there for you in recovery to assist with breastfeeding.

### Q: What if I'm having a planned cesarean or an unplanned cesarean section?



Whether you are having a planned cesarean or an unplanned one a doula can support both you and your partner through this sometimes scary and very emotional time. Since most doulas have had the opportunity of experiencing cesarean sections at one time or another, she will be able to explain to you and your partner what to expect and help you prepare mentally for it

**Q: Will a doula replace my partner?**

Oftentimes partners feel overwhelmed when expected to remember all of the training and education they received prenatally while their loved one is in labor. Likewise, it is just as much a joyous and intense event for partners. A doula does not replace partners, but rather enhance the experience by remembering all of the prenatal education, bringing their experience and education to the birth, and freeing partners up to be the emotional support - loving and caring - for the mom.

**Q: Isn't my midwife/OB/nurse enough support?**

A care provider in the hospital setting has many patients to attend to, making their support sporadic and sometimes not possible (in the event another patient needs them). In a homebirth setting, midwives will often not come until labor is well established. A doula is continuous support in both home and hospital settings.

**Q: Does a doula come to my house in early labor?**

Most moms choose to stay home in early labor and our doula will come to your house when you feel you need the support.

**Q: Does a doula perform medical tasks?**

A doula does not perform any medical tasks. She is there for physical comfort, praise, and reassurance. We are familiar with what normal, natural labor looks like, though, and can, then, assess when something does not look normal or natural and advise accordingly.

**Q: Does a doula advocate for me?**

During pregnancy and throughout delivery she will provide you with her knowledge and experience of the birth process. She can give you all of the options and information, and she can remind you of your choices and desires during birth... but she does not speak for you.

**Q: How does a doula work with hospital staff?**

A doula is not there to take the place of the healthcare team. Primary care providers are responsible for the medical health needs of the mother and baby. A doula helps ensure that the mother's non-medical needs are also met. Doulas do not perform any medical or clinical procedures. A doula provides constant care throughout the entire labor and delivery, and for several hours postpartum. Doulas act as a liaison with the medical staff, but do not make decisions for the mother. We also facilitate positive communication between a woman and her care provider.

**Q: Do doulas work only with midwives?**

No, since doulas are hired privately by the client they work for the client no matter if it's a doctor or midwife, home or hospital planned birth.

**Q: What are the benefits of having a doula?**

Research shows that childbirth goes more smoothly with a doula present:

50% reduction in the cesarean rate

25% shorter labor

60% reduction in epidural requests

40% reduction in oxytocin use

30% reduction in analgesia use

40% reduction in forceps delivery

-Mothering the Mother; by Marshall H. Klaus (Author), John H. Kennell (Author), Phyllis H. Klaus (Author)