

# What Is a Birth Doula?

From the ancient Greek meaning "a woman who serves".

Today, the term "Doula" is used to refer to a trained and experienced professional who provides **continuous physical, emotional and informational support** to a mother (and her partner if she has one) before, during and just after birth.



## ~ The 3 Pillars of Doula Support ~

### Avoid Google - Ask Your Doula!

A Doula offers **INFORMATIONAL** support by keeping you and your partner informed through each milestone of your pregnancy and postpartum journey. They can also help you find evidence based information about different options in pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum. A Doula is an unbiased resource. NEVER a source!

### Your Emotions and Fears Are Valid!

A Doula is a continuous comforting presence offering reassurance and encouragement, showing a caring and empathetic attitude and helping you and your partner work through fears and self doubt about pregnancy and birth. Debriefing after birth is another way a Doula can provide **EMOTIONAL** support.

### Facilitating The Birth of Your Dreams!

- Massage/counter pressure
- Position changes and suggestions for optimal labour progression
- Create a calming environment
- Water therapy (bath, shower)
- Hydrating and feeding birther
- Hands on infant feeding support
- Doulas provide **PHYSICAL** support by anticipating and tending to our physical needs during birth.



### Doula Support For Partners

- Prenatal Education about the birthing process
- Helping them work through their own fears or apprehensions
- Facilitating conversations with the two of you
- Teaching them Pain management techniques
- Ensuring they are fed and hydrated
- Reassurance and Comfort during the birthing process
- Education about how to support a mother in the postpartum period.

**Doulas do NOT replace partners!** A Doula's job is to educate, emotionally and physically support partners to empower them to support mothers through the birthing process.

### Evidence of the Doula Difference

- **25%** decrease in the risk of Cesarean
- **8%** increase in the likelihood of a spontaneous vaginal birth
- **10%** decrease in the use of any medications for pain relief
- **Shorter labors** by 41 minutes on average
- **38%** decrease in the baby's risk of a low five minute Apgar score
- **31%** decrease in the risk of being dissatisfied with the birth experience

### Thinking About Hiring a Doula?

- Ask about their training.
- Ask about their experience.
- Are they available during your due month?
- What Services do they provide?
- Is conversation easy with them?
- What are their fees?
- What are your general Instincts about this Doula?

"If a Doula were a drug, it would be unethical not to use it."

-Dr. John H. Kennell

### IMPORTANT!

**No, a Doula is NOT "Just like a Midwife"!** A Doula does not and is not qualified to perform any medical procedures including, cervical checks, blood pressure checks, fetal heart rate monitoring, delivering/catching the baby etc. **A Doula is NOT and does NOT replace a Health Care Provider such as a Midwife or OB.**