



# Birth Doula Frequently Asked Questions

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- What training have you had?
  - I trained in 2001 as a birth and postpartum doula through DONA. I am also a prenatal massage specialist (2000). I use that experience to help my clients in labor. In 2014 I trained as a Certified Lactation Consultant.
- Do you have one or more backup doulas for times when you are not available? May we meet her/them?
  - Yes, I have several doulas that I work with. I will select a backup doula once we commit to working together. I will bring her to at least one of my prenatal visits.
- What is your fee, what does it include and what are your refund policies?
  - Please see current service agreement for up to date pricing.
  - Prenatal Massage Therapy- \$80 per hour. Contracted clients receive a 10% discount.
  - When I commit to supporting a client, I turn away other work and commit myself to being available to you during your window of birth. Therefore, a nonrefundable deposit is required to secure you spot.
- What is included in your fee?
  - Unlimited phone, text and email support prenatally
  - 2 prenatal visits each lasting approximately 1 ½ hours. During these visits we will go over everything needed for me to support you properly during your labor.
  - During labor, I will join you when you are in active labor (home or hospital). Before active labor I will be supporting you over the phone offering your comfort strategies and early labor management techniques.
  - I will remain with you until after the birth of your baby and help you get breastfeeding started (if that's your wish). Usually an hour or two.
  - Unlimited phone, text and email support during the first few weeks after birth for breastfeeding or early parenting support.

- One postpartum visit usually about 1 month after birth. The purpose of this visit is to go over your birth and answer any questions you might have about how your birth experience went. This is different from a postpartum doula visit. That would be under a separate contract and we can discuss that in detail if you wish.
- How many births have you attended?
  - Over 300.
  - I've had an incredibly varied experience. I've worked with mom's from a variety of backgrounds and family situations. I've also supported mom's who've had a wide variety of birth experiences.
  - I have the experience to be a calm, reassuring, and knowledgeable presence during your birth.
- I'm giving birth at \_\_\_\_\_ hospital or with \_\_\_\_\_ doctor? Do you have any experience with my hospital/doctor?
  - Yes. I've worked in all the major Philadelphia area hospitals.
  - It is highly likely I have experience with your provider
  - I work really hard to establish a good working relationship with all hospital staff. We are all here to support you in the best way possible.
- What is a birth doula?
  - A birth doula is a person trained and experienced in childbirth who provides continuous physical, emotional and informational support to the mother before, during and just after childbirth.
- Where does the word "doula" come from?
  - The word "doula" comes from ancient Greek, meaning "Woman's servant." Throughout history and in much of the world today, a cadre of women support a woman through labor and birth, giving back rubs and providing continuous emotional support. Like their historical counterparts, DONA International birth doulas know how to help a woman in labor feel better. However, today's doulas are much more diverse than their predecessors. DONA International membership includes men and women from a wide range of ages and cultural backgrounds.
- What effects does the presence of a doula have on birth outcomes?
 

Numerous clinical studies have found that a doula's presence at birth:

  - tends to result in shorter labors with fewer complications
  - reduces negative feelings about one's childbirth experience
  - reduces the need for pitocin (a labor-inducing drug), forceps or vacuum extraction

- reduces the requests for pain medication and epidurals, as well as the incidence of cesareans
- What effects does the presence of a doula have on the mother?
  - When a doula is present during and after childbirth, women report greater satisfaction with their birth experience, make more positive assessments of their babies, have fewer cesareans and requests for medical intervention, and less postpartum depression.
- What effects do the presence of doulas have on babies?
  - Studies have shown that babies born with doulas present tend to have shorter hospital stays with fewer admissions to special care nurseries, breastfeed more easily and have more affectionate mothers in the postpartum period.
- How do doulas practice?
  - Doulas practice in three ways: privately hired directly by clients, as hospital employees, and as volunteers in community or hospital programs.
- Does a doula replace nursing staff?
  - No. Doulas do not replace nurses or other medical staff. Doulas do not perform clinical or medical tasks such as taking blood pressure or temperature, monitoring fetal heart rate, doing vaginal examinations or providing postpartum clinical care. They are there to comfort and support the mother and to enhance communication between the mother and medical professionals.
- Does a doula make decisions on my behalf?
  - A doula does not make decisions for clients or intervene in their clinical care. She provides informational and emotional support, while respecting a woman's decisions.
- Will a doula make my partner feel unnecessary?
  - No, a doula is supportive to both the mother and her partner, and plays a crucial role in helping a partner become involved in the birth to the extent he/she feels comfortable.
- What is your philosophy about birth and supporting women and their partners through labor?
  - I believe in non-judgemental support and informed choice. I have experience supporting women in many different situations. I believe that it is my role as your birth doula to try as best as I can to help you have the experience YOU desire. Research has also show that the single biggest determining factor of a mother's satisfaction with her birth experience is how much control she feels over the

situation. I strive to make sure that my clients are making informed, educated choices about each decision in their birth.

- May we meet to discuss our birth plans and the role you will play in supporting me through birth?
  - Absolutely. Once we have committed to working together, we will schedule 2 prenatal visits at our mutual convenience. At each visit, we will go over all relevant aspects of your birth plan, and how I can best serve you.
  
- May we call you with questions or concerns before and after the birth?
  - Of course. Please call, email or text with any questions you have. I encourage this communication. This will allow us to get to know each better and for you to build a trust.
  
- When do you try to join women in labor? Do you come to our home or meet us at the place of birth?
  - Generally I go to women when they are in active labor. Usually the woman requests I come to her home first and remain with her until she goes to her place of birth. If there is an unusual or extenuating circumstance I will accompany the woman immediately to her place of birth. Of course, all of this depends on the individual woman's wishes.
  
- Do you meet with us after the birth to review the labor and answer questions?
  - Included in your birth doula fee is one postnatal visit. I will meet with you shortly after the birth, at our mutual convenience, to review your birth experience, answer questions, and give you a written copy of my observations of your baby's birth story. I will also do a brief breastfeeding assessment and offer any appropriate advice. This is not a postpartum doula visit, but rather an extension of our birth work together.