



## **1. So you're basically a midwife, right?**

NO! Midwives are medical care providers who perform clinical tasks such as monitoring and testing along with continuous medical care during pregnancy, labor and delivery. Doulas are non-medical support persons who are profession-ally trained to provide unbiased information, labor coaching, emotional support and postpartum support. We “mother the mother”, meeting her emotional needs and providing her partner with tools and resources to help her as well. Doulas make a great team with midwives, nurses, and doctors since we can focus on the laboring mother’s emotional needs while they focus on the medical aspects of care.

## **2. Do you only attend a certain kind of birth?**

NO! Doulas assist all types of parents in all types of birthing situations. We attend home births and midwife/OBGyn-assisted hospital births, epidural-assisted vaginal deliveries, unmedicated births, along with induced, spontaneous or scheduled Caesarean births. We support the parents’ informed choice of where, how and with whom to give birth.

## **3. Are you going to “run interference” for me and be my advocate to the hospital staff?**

No, this is not a doula's job. A large part of our job is to teach you about all of your options and how to respectfully and effectively communicate your wishes to your care providers. Although we are happy to remind you and your partner during labor of your options and plans, we don't take away your power and diminish your voice by stepping in and speaking for you and making decisions for you.

## **4. How can a doula help me if I'm not planning to have a natural birth?**

Caring, non-judgmental support belongs on every woman's birth team, even if she is not planning to attempt an unmedicated birth. Doulas can provide emotional support in this situation as well as assist with optimal positioning in the hospital bed to help the baby descend through the birth canal. Doulas can also provide reassurance and lessen anxiety before and during Cesarean surgery as well as giving practical help throughout recovery.

## **5. How do doulas help after the baby is born?**

Transitioning to new parenthood is wonderful but it's also challenging. Having a postpartum doula can help make this as smooth a transition as possible and take some of the anxiety away. Most doulas include one postpartum home visit in their services, and some offer separate, specialized postpartum care packages. Postpartum doulas are trained to provide emotional support, practical household assistance, breastfeeding support, and to spot the signs of postpartum depression. We also may be the only non-judgmental voice you hear after taking your baby home and beginning the journey of parenting decisions!

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