

### Benefits of Hiring a Doula for Your Out-of-Hospital Birth

Although midwife and doula roles often overlap, a midwife's most important job is to monitor the mother and baby for safety. The midwife will offer emotional support but it is not continuous because she will need to monitor both of the mother and baby's vital signs intermittently as well as make clinical decisions and assessments. A doula's entire role is to offer continuous emotional and physical support to the laboring woman. I believe every woman *deserves* to have as much support during one of the most miraculous times in life.

- A doula decreases the rate of transferring to the hospital in labor.
- If a hospital transfer does occur, the doula stays with you and often has even *more* experience in hospital birth than the midwife, since the midwife's expertise is "out-of-hospital" birth.
- A doula can help facilitate ways the woman's partner can support her so the partner takes as much of a role as he (and the mother) want.
- A doula can offer another set of options and opinions for the family to consider at any point during pregnancy, labor or postpartum.
- A doula is likely to be there before the midwife, continues to be there through the birth and early postpartum period.
- Many doulas will offer to take pictures and some doulas even bring professional cameras to take pictures, if the family desires.
- A doula is trained to offer many different comfort measures, such as breathing, touch, aromatherapy, tools (like birth balls), relaxation, movement, positioning, etc.
- Studies repeatedly report that women who have doulas are more likely to have a spontaneous vaginal birth and less likely to have pain medication, epidurals, negative feelings about their childbirth, vacuum or forceps-assisted births, and c-sections. In addition, their labors were shorter by about 40 minutes and their babies were less likely to have low Apgar scores.
- Both the doula and midwife help with breastfeeding, increasing success.
- Most women who have a doula at one birth, continue to have doulas at subsequent births because their benefits were so great.
- You deserve to have a doula. You deserve to have someone tell you all of the things that you are doing so well, that you're amazing, and to encourage you to keep going.
- If you are concerned about the cost of hiring a doula, talk to your midwife. There are many things that go into calculating what a doula charges and we can figure out what sort of doula is best for you based on your ideals. A doula also doesn't have to be a certified professional, it could be a friend or family member who is comfortable and excited to support you through natural childbirth.

"I wanted both my husband and myself to have support during our labor and birth. Who wants to be in labor, look up and see an exhausted husband who hasn't had a break? I didn't know if I would be able to effectively communicate to him how he could help in the moment but I knew a doula could offer ideas. My doula and my midwives help him help me. During a particularly difficult labor, I never had to think about being taken care of or supported, it just seamlessly happened. Having a team makes all the difference!"

-Leisha B.