



The Premier Doula Organization

PO Box 626, Jasper, IN 47547
Phone: 888-788-DONA (3662) Fax: 812-634-1491
Doula@DONA.org www.DONA.org

Birth Doula: A woman trained and experienced in childbirth who provides continuous physical, emotional, and informational support to a woman during labor, birth and the immediate postpartum period.

Postpartum doula: A woman trained to care for new families in the first weeks after birth providing household help, advice with newborn care and infant feeding, and emotional support.

Eleven studies showed the following effects of doula support:

Effects on Birth Outcomes:

Labors are shorter.
There are fewer complications.
Cesarean rates are reduced.
There is less need for oxytocin to speed up labor.
Need for forceps is reduced.
Women request less pain medication and epidurals

Effects on the Mother:

Greater satisfaction with their birth experience.
More positive assessments of their babies.
Less postpartum depression.

Effects on the Baby:

Babies have shorter hospital stays with fewer admissions to special care nurseries.
Babies breastfeed more easily.
Mothers are more affectionate to their babies postpartum.

Effects on the health care system:

The cost of obstetrical care is dramatically reduced.
Women are pleased with the personalized care doulas offer.

The Benefit of continuous support in labor is recognized by:

The World Health Organization
The Medical Leadership Council (an organization of over 1200 U.S. hospitals)
The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada

How doulas practice:

Privately, hired directly by clients
As hospital employees
As volunteers in community or hospital programs

DONA – Doulas of North America: A non-profit organization incorporated in 1992, which trains and certifies doulas according to strict ethical standards. To locate a doula in your area or to find out about DONA approved trainings www.DONA.org or call toll-free 888-788-DONA.



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Questions to Ask a Prospective Birth Doula

The following questions will help you decide if a particular doula is right for you. You may consider asking these questions on the phone, before having an in-person interview.

- What training have you had? (If a doula is certified you may consider checking with the certifying organization.)
- What is your philosophy about childbirth and supporting women and their partners through labor?
- When do you try to join women in labor? Do you come to our home or do you meet us at the place of birth?
- May we meet with you to discuss our birth plans and the role you will play in supporting me (us) through childbirth?
- May we call you with questions or concerns before or after the birth?
- Do you meet with me (us) after the birth to review the labor and answer questions?
- Do you work with one or more backup doulas for times when you are not available? May we meet her/them?
- What is your fee, what does it include, and what are your refund policies?
- Can you provide references? (Be sure to check the references.)

When you meet the doula (and it is a good idea for both of you and your partner to meet her), pay particular attention to your personal perceptions of the doula. Is she kind, warm, enthusiastic? Is she knowledgeable? Does she communicate well? Is she a good listener? Is she comfortable with your choices or does she seem to have her own agenda? Do you feel comfortable with her? The way you feel with her may be more important than the number of births she has attended. You may want to interview more than one doula and make a comparison to help you find the doula who is right for you.