



EARTH'S NATURAL TOUCH: BIRTH CARE & BEYOND, INC.

***SIS. DON'T LET THEM
TURN YOU AWAY!***

*Your Pregnancy & Postpartum Advocacy Guide
Helping You Feel Educated, Prepared, and Heard*



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Congratulations on Your Pregnancy!

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Whether you're expecting your first baby or welcoming another child into your family, pregnancy is a time filled with excitement, questions, decisions, and new experiences. Every pregnancy is unique, and every family deserves to feel informed, respected, supported, and empowered throughout the journey.

At Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc., we know that knowledge builds confidence. When you understand your options, know what questions to ask, recognize when something doesn't feel right, and have a trusted support system beside you, you're better prepared to make informed decisions and advocate for the care you deserve.

This guide was created to encourage confidence, not fear. Most pregnancies are healthy, and most families will never experience a serious complication. However, knowing the warning signs, understanding your rights, and communicating openly with your healthcare team can help you feel more confident throughout pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period.

Our goal is that you'll keep this booklet nearby, bring it to your prenatal appointments, discuss it with your partner or support team, and use it as a practical resource whenever questions arise.

Remember Sis,

You deserve to be heard.

You deserve answers you understand.

You deserve timely, respectful, compassionate care.

- ENT Doulas



Sis, Don't Let Them Turn You Away!



Sis, Don't Let Them Turn You Away! is a community awareness and advocacy campaign that was created by Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc. to ensure pregnant and postpartum women, (especially Black women) know that their concerns deserve to be heard and taken seriously. The campaign connects families to trusted education on maternal warning signs, self-advocacy, community support, and resources that can help them navigate pregnancy, birth, and postpartum with

confidence. This campaign reflects ENT's mission to reduce maternal health disparities through education, doula support, and advocacy while promoting respectful, equitable maternity care. Most importantly, the campaign reminds women that trusting their instincts and seeking care when something feels wrong can be life-saving.

Why is this campaign so important?

- You know your body best. If something doesn't feel right, you deserve to have your concerns listened to, promptly evaluated, and treated with respect.
- Early action can make a difference. Recognizing warning signs and seeking timely care can help prevent complications during pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period.
- Knowledge builds confidence. Understanding common warning signs, knowing what questions to ask, and learning how to communicate concerns can help families feel more confident and prepared.
- Every family deserves respectful maternity care. Regardless of race, income, insurance, or birthplace, every pregnant person deserves compassionate, culturally responsive, and equitable care.

- No one should navigate pregnancy alone. Community support, doulas, family members, healthcare providers, and trusted friends all play an important role in creating a safe and positive pregnancy journey.

Why should partners and support people be involved?

Partners, family members, and trusted support people are often the first to notice when something changes. They can provide encouragement, help communicate concerns, ask questions, take notes, and advocate when a pregnant or postpartum person is overwhelmed, exhausted, or not feeling well. By learning the warning signs together and understanding how to speak up respectfully, families become stronger advocates and more confident members of the care team.



At Earth's Natural Touch, we teach that every family deserves to receive accurate information, informed consent, respectful communication, and quality, trauma informed maternity care. Our Perinatal Bill of Rights for Black Families was developed to help families understand what they should expect throughout pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. We encourage every expectant parent and support person to read it, share it, and use it as a tool for informed decision-making and self-advocacy.

Together, through education, advocacy, and community, we can help ensure that every mother is seen, every voice is valued, and every family has the opportunity to move, nourish, and flourish.

Our Goals

Through this campaign, we strive to:

- Provide families with accurate, evidence-informed information about pregnancy, birth, postpartum recovery, and newborn care.
- Increase awareness of maternal warning signs and when to seek medical attention.

- Encourage respectful communication and shared decision-making between families and healthcare providers.
- Help pregnant people understand their rights and feel confident asking questions.
- Strengthen support systems by involving partners, family members, doulas, and the broader community.
- Reduce preventable maternal health complications through education, advocacy, and early recognition of concerns.



♥ *Sis, You deserve to be heard. You deserve answers. You deserve timely, respectful care. Trust your instincts, ask questions, and don't hesitate to seek medical attention when something doesn't feel right. If necessary, bring someone with you to help advocate for your care.*

Do you currently feel confident, nervous or fearful about advocating for yourself during your medical care? I feel: _____



Maya Angelou, Poet

"I learned a long time ago the wisest thing I can do is be on my own side."

It Takes A Village

You've probably heard the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child."

Considered an African proverb, its enduring message is universal: Children thrive when families are surrounded by caring, informed, and connected communities. At Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc., we know that idea begins long before a baby is born.

*It takes a village to support a healthy pregnancy.
It takes a village to welcome a new baby.
It takes a village to help a family flourish.*

And it takes a village to ensure that every mother is heard, respected, and cared for. A village is not built in a single day.

It is built one conversation, one act of kindness, one helping hand, and one healthy family at a time.

*A village listens. A village learns.
A village shows up. A village shares knowledge.
A village offers support even before it is needed, not just during a crisis.
Whether you are pregnant, a partner, a Dad-Bassador, or a Community Ambassador who cares about the well-being of families, you have an important role in helping to create safer, healthier experiences.*



♥ *Sis...Building your village before the baby arrives makes it easier to ask for help after the baby is born.*



Build Your Village

Pregnancy was never meant to be experienced alone.

Building a strong support system can make a huge difference in your confidence, well-being, and overall experience. Your village is made up of the people who educate you, encourage you, advocate with you, and remind you that you don't have to carry everything by yourself.

Each member of your village has a different role, but they all share one important responsibility: listening to you, respecting your choices, and supporting your well-being.

Your Partner

Your partner is often your closest teammate. They can learn the warning signs, attend appointments, ask questions, help communicate your concerns, provide comfort during labor, and continue supporting you throughout the postpartum period.

Your Doula

A doula provides emotional, physical, and informational support throughout pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period. Doulas do not replace medical providers or make medical decisions for you, but in addition to pregnancy preparation and physical labor support, they can help you prepare for appointments, understand your options, ask questions, communicate effectively, and feel more confident throughout your journey.

Your Family and Friends

Loved ones can offer practical help, emotional encouragement, transportation, meals, childcare, and companionship. Encourage those closest to you to learn about pregnancy with you, know the warning signs and understand the goals of this campaign and their role.



Your Maternity Care Provider

Your maternity care provider is your partner in managing the clinical aspects of your pregnancy, birth, and postpartum care, including prenatal visits, laboratory tests, ultrasounds, fetal assessments, screenings, diagnosis, treatment, and other medical decisions. Depending on your health needs and preferences, your care may be provided by a midwife or an obstetrician (OB). Midwives provide comprehensive maternity care and may practice in hospitals, birth centers, or home birth settings (for appropriately screened, low-risk pregnancies), while obstetricians are physicians who specialize in pregnancy, childbirth, surgery, and the management of high-risk or complex pregnancies. Both are medical professionals who work to promote the health and safety of you and your baby and may collaborate with one another or with other specialists when needed. Your maternity care provider is not an authority over you. They are a partner in your care, working with you to support informed decision-making and help you make the choices that are best for your family.

Mental Health Professional

Pregnancy and postpartum bring emotional as well as physical changes. A mental health professional can help you navigate stress, anxiety, depression, grief, trauma, relationship changes, or the adjustment to parenthood. Seeking mental health support is a sign of strength, not weakness. If you are already on medication, they can discuss any potential changes in your prescription that may be necessary.

Other Providers

Other professionals may also play an important role in supporting your comfort, recovery, and overall well-being during pregnancy and postpartum. Depending on your needs, you may benefit from services such as chiropractic care, pelvic floor physical therapy, prenatal massage therapy, craniosacral therapy, acupuncture, or nutrition services. These providers can work alongside your maternity care team to help address common physical changes throughout your journey.



Your Community

Community organizations like Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond Inc., support groups, childbirth educators, cultural communities, neighbors, and maternal and infant health programs remind you that you are not alone. Community creates connection, encouragement, shared experiences, and opportunities to learn from others who understand the journey.

Building My Village

My Care Team

Primary Prenatal Provider: _____

Hospital or Birth Center: _____

Doula & Back-Up Doula: _____

Lactation Professional: _____

Mental Health Professional: _____

Other Supportive Professionals: _____

Pharmacy: _____

Community Organizations that support Families: _____

Who Can I Call Anytime

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

My Emergency Contact

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Phone Number: _____

Being Part of the Village

Supporting Her with Love, Respect, and Confidence

Pregnancy is not a journey that should be traveled alone. Whether you are a partner, grandparent, parent, sibling, friend, doula, or another trusted support person, you have an important role in helping her feel safe, respected, and supported.

Being part of her village isn't about having all the answers. It's about showing up, listening, encouraging, and helping her navigate pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period with confidence. Small acts of kindness can have a lasting impact.

At Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, we teach that strong support systems help create healthier families and stronger communities. The "Sis, Don't Let Them Turn You Away!" campaign is about strengthening the entire village, not placing the responsibility for advocacy on one person's shoulders.

Listen First

- One of the greatest gifts you can offer is your willingness to listen.
- If she says something doesn't feel right, don't dismiss it. Instead, ask questions, offer reassurance, and encourage her to contact her healthcare provider if she's concerned.
- Sometimes simply saying, "I'm glad you told me. Let's figure this out together," can make all the difference.

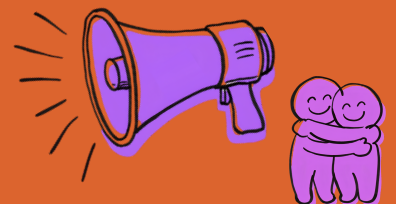
LISTEN



Village Tip

Remember that advocacy is a team effort. Helping someone ask questions, seek clarification, or request additional information is one of the most valuable ways you can support them.

Village Tip: Advocacy is part of participating in your own healthcare. Respectfully asking questions, expressing concerns, and understanding your options are important aspects of patient-centered care.



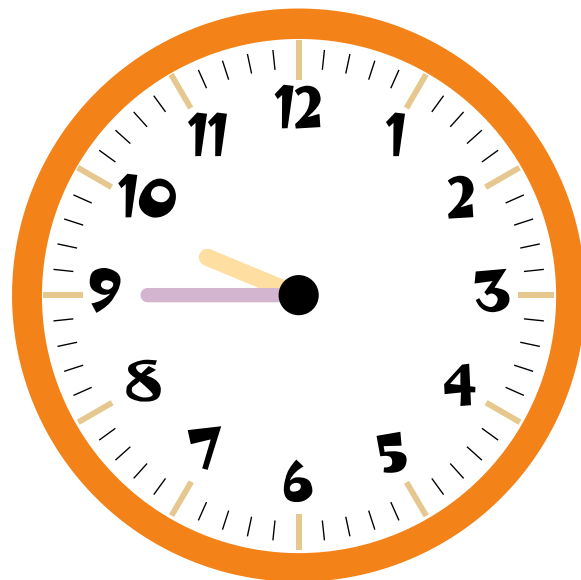


Learn the Warning Signs Together

- Take time to review the maternal warning signs in this booklet.
- Knowing what to watch for means you're better prepared to recognize when something may need prompt medical attention. If you notice changes in her physical or emotional well-being, encourage her to seek guidance from her healthcare provider.
- Remember: it's always okay to ask questions or seek clarification when something doesn't seem right.

Encourage Timely Care

- If she is worried about a symptom, don't encourage her to "wait it out" without talking to a healthcare professional.
- Help her contact her provider, visit urgent care, or go to an emergency room. Trusting her instincts and responding promptly can make a meaningful difference.



Be Present at Appointments

- When invited, attend prenatal visits, ultrasounds, childbirth classes, or hospital tours.
- A second set of ears can help remember important information, ask thoughtful questions, take notes, and provide emotional support. Sometimes hearing the same information together makes decision-making easier.

Help Her Ask Questions

Healthcare conversations can feel overwhelming, especially when there's a lot of new information.

Encourage her to ask questions such as:

- Can you explain that another way?
- Can you tell me why you believe this option is the best fit for me?

Your calm encouragement can help her feel more confident in making decisions about her care.



Respect Her Choices

- Every pregnancy is different.
- Support her informed decisions, even if they differ from what you expected. Encourage open conversations with her healthcare team and remember that the best decisions are made using evidence, clinical expertise, and her personal values.

Help Protect Her Peace

Pregnancy can be physically and emotionally demanding.

- Support her by helping with meals, household tasks, childcare, transportation, or simply encouraging her to rest.
- Ask: "What can I take off your plate today?"
- Small acts of kindness can have a big impact.

Support Her Mental Well-Being

- Check in regularly.
- Ask how she's feeling, not just physically, but emotionally.
- Celebrate small victories.
- Listen without judgment.
- Encourage her to seek additional support if she's feeling overwhelmed, anxious, depressed, or isolated.
- Remind her that asking for help is a sign of strength.

Support Her Feeding Goals

- If she plans to breastfeed, your encouragement matters.
- You can help by learning about breastfeeding before the baby arrives, protecting uninterrupted feeding time, bringing her water or snacks, helping with household responsibilities, and encouraging her to reach out for lactation support if challenges arise.
- If her feeding journey changes, continue offering encouragement without judgment.





Speak Up

Sometimes advocacy simply means helping ensure that her questions are heard. If she seems overwhelmed or unable to speak for herself, you might say: "She mentioned she's still concerned about this. Could we talk through it one more time?" Or "We'd appreciate a little more information before making our decision." Respectful communication helps build trust while ensuring her voice remains part of the conversation.

The Village Remains Beyond Birth

- Your role doesn't end once the baby arrives. Many families receive lots of attention before the birth, but not so much when baby gets here.
- Offer practical, hands-on help. A simple call, text, meal, visit, cleaning, or errand run can make a meaningful difference.
- Encourage follow-up appointments. Sometimes, motherhood can be very overwhelming. But making sure she attends any scheduled postpartum or newborn care visits is important.
- Watch for warning signs. Many mothers may not realize they are experiencing something concerning or may think it's a normal part of postpartum recovery. Promptly get evaluated.
- Help her stay connected to family, friends, doulas, lactation support, and community resources.
- Celebrate progress, not perfection. Parenting is a learning journey so matter how many children you have. Each baby is different. Encourage her. Remind her of her strengths and recognize the small victories.
- Help protect her peace. If anyone does not nurture her in these ways, but instead brings "drama" to her, keep them away.

Village Tip: • *You don't have to be a healthcare professional to make a difference.*



- *By listening, learning, encouraging, and standing beside her, you're helping create the kind of village every family deserves.*
- *Together, we can help every mother feel heard, respected, supported, and empowered.*

Making Informed Decisions

Every pregnancy is different, Everybody is different. Every family is different.

Sometimes your healthcare provider may recommend a test, medication, procedure, or treatment. The goal of informed decision-making is to understand your options, ask thoughtful questions, and make decisions that fit your health, your needs, your baby's needs, and your personal values.

Good healthcare is a partnership. Your provider brings medical knowledge and clinical experience. You bring your goals, values, preferences, and lived experience and expertise.

Together, you can make the best decisions for you and your baby.

When offered a procedure or medication, the BRAINED method helps you slow down, gather information, and better understand your options

♥ ***Sis... You are never a burden for asking questions. Understanding your care is an important part of receiving good care.***

BRAINED: A Simple Tool Used to Make Decisions

B — Benefits: "What are the benefits of this recommendation?" - How might this help me or my baby?

R — Risks: "What are the possible risks or downsides?" - Every option, including doing nothing, has potential benefits and risks.

A — Alternatives: "Are there any other reasonable options?" - Sometimes there are several ways to approach the same situation.

I — Intuition: "What is my intuition telling me?"

- How do I feel about this decision?
- Do I understand enough to feel comfortable?
- Do I need more information?

N — Nothing (or Next): "What happens if we wait?" or "If we do this, what happens next?" - Sometimes immediate action is needed.

Sometimes, careful monitoring is a reasonable option. Understanding the timing helps you make informed decisions.

E — Emergency: "Is this an emergency?"

This can help you decide whether you have time to wait and make a decision or have to do something NOW.

D — Decide: Make your decision.

After evaluating all of the information, you MAY be ready to make a decision.



What if You Don't Even Know What to Ask?



Sometimes, the hardest part of speaking up is knowing what to ask in the first place.

You may be told that you need a test, medication, procedure, induction, surgery, or another intervention. You may hear a medical term you've never heard before. You may even be given information that sounds important but don't know what questions would help you understand it. That's okay. But, making sure you understand before you agree, disagree, or walk away is important.

You don't have to know the right questions to ask for an explanation.

If you don't remember any of the tips or tools that we give you, and are just unsure what to ask, you can always just say something like, ***"I don't know what I don't know. Can you help me understand details about how this could affect me (and my baby) and what I should be considering before I make a decision?"***

Your healthcare team should take time to help identify the information you need.

Asking questions is only the first step. A truly informed decision happens when you:

- ✓ Feel your questions were fully answered.
- ✓ Understand the information provided.
- ✓ Know and understand your options.
- ✓ Understand both the possible benefits and possible risks of accepting or declining
- ✓ Have enough time (when appropriate) to think.
- ✓ Know what could happen if you decide to wait.
- ✓ Feel your values and preferences were included in the conversation.



Village Tip: Offer to attend prenatal appointments, childbirth classes, or hospital tours if you're invited. Another set of ears can help remember important information and provide emotional support.

When Something Comes Up Unexpectedly

Sometimes, you don't have time to prepare questions ahead of time.

A healthcare professional may enter the room and say something like:

"We're about to get this labor going while preparing a medication." or ***"It's time for your vaginal exam."*** or ***"We're going to start your medication."***

You may feel surprised, worried, or pressured to immediately agree because saying things like this can sound like you don't have an option. You do. Before responding, take a breath.

If the situation is not an emergency, you can ask: ***"Can you give me a moment to understand what you're recommending?"*** Just because something sounds "routine" or "normal" doesn't mean you have to agree to having it done.

When You Don't Understand the Recommendation

You don't have to pretend you understand. You can ask questions. Consider these:

- "I want to make sure I understand before I agree. Can you explain that again?"
- "Can you explain that without the medical terminology?"
- "Can you give me an example of what that would look like and why it is being done?"
- "Can you explain the most important thing you want me to understand about this?"

When You Need Time or Information

- "I understand that you are making a recommendation. I need a little more time to process this information."
- "I'd like to talk this over with my partner?"
- "Can you write down the name of the medication/procedure so I can make sure I understand what we're discussing?"
- "What information should I review before making this decision?"



Sis, needing more time to understand is not the same as refusing care.



Sis, It's OK to ask your provider to explain something in a way that you understand. You deserve answers that make sense to you.



Sis, Asking questions and advocating for your care and your baby's care does not make you a difficult patient.

Communicating After Your Appointment

If you leave an appointment still feeling confused or experience changes in your condition, it's okay to call back to ask for clarity or report those changes. Understanding your care is part of receiving good care. Reporting changes helps to guide your care.

Ask your providers how to communicate with them after your appointment if you need to. There may be a communication portal, or specific number you can call.



If you need to contact them after a visit, you can say something like, ***"I was seen today (or on _____, but something has changed since then."*** Be as specific as possible when explaining yourself, asking your questions, and describing your condition. Specific information helps your healthcare team understand what has changed. Ex: ***"Since yesterday, I've developed a severe headache that hasn't improved with rest and fluids."*** or ***"My baby was moving normally yesterday, but today the movement is noticeably different."***



Think about a time when you felt heard and supported in your healthcare. What made you feel that way? _____

Think about a time when you did NOT feel heard and supported in your healthcare. What made you feel that way? _____

What would you do the same or differently to ensure that you are heard and treated appropriately and timely? _____

List 3 Reflective Thoughts

- _____
- _____
- _____

But, Asking Questions is Not Always Enough.



You Have to Understand the Answers

Numbers can sound scary, especially during this time. Sometimes information is shared in a way that may sound more frightening than it really is and sometimes the risks are not mentioned enough. Learning to understand the numbers can help you make decisions with confidence.

Relative Risk vs. Absolute Risk

Relative Risk tells you how much the risk changed.

Absolute Risk tells you how likely it is to happen.



Imagine This

Without a certain treatment, 2 out of 100 people experience a particular complication. With the treatment, 1 out of 100 people experience it.

In this example, the risk without treatment is twice as high as the risk with treatment. That's a 100% higher relative risk. BUT, look at the actual numbers:

With treatment: 1 out of 100 = 1% AND Without treatment: 2 out of 100 = 2%

So the absolute risk difference is 1 percentage point.

Why Does This Matter?

Hearing these may sound scary:

- "Not having this treatment doubles your risk."
- "Your risk is twice as high without the treatment."
- "Your risk increases by 100% if you don't take the treatment."
- "There is a 100% increased risk if you don't take the treatment."
- "The risk is 100% higher without the treatment."
- "Not taking the treatment is associated with a 2-fold increase in risk."

But hearing these gives you more information about what "double the risk" actually means.:

- "Your chance is about 1% with the treatment and about 2% without it."
- "About 1 out of 100 people experience this with the treatment, compared with about 2 out of 100 without treatment."
- "The treatment lowers the chance from about 2 out of 100 people to about 1 out of 100 people."

These statements can all be true.

They are simply describing the difference in two different ways.

What does it all mean? This means that about 98 out of 100 people (98%) without treatment and 99 out of 100 people (99%) with treatment, would not experience this complication.

What You Can Ask

When you are getting information from your provider, it may make complete sense or it may be very confusing. You can ask these questions to help you get an answer you understand.

- “What is my actual chance?” / “What is the absolute risk?”
- “What is the actual likelihood that this will happen to me?”
- “Out of 100 pregnant people like me, about how many experience this?”
- “Is this based on my individual situation or on the general population?”
- “Does anything make my personal risk higher or lower?”
- “When you say the risk is higher, what is the actual chance or absolute risk?”
- “Could you tell me the absolute risk instead of just saying the risk increases?”



Good healthcare providers want you to understand the information they're sharing.

If You Feel Overwhelmed

It is completely understandable for someone to feel overwhelmed while trying to process all of this information. Especially because you want to make the best decision for you and your baby.

Take some time to understand.

Sometimes, you may not understand medical information in the way it is shared, and sometimes, you may want to see the research for yourself. You can ask to be pointed to the research that shows the information you are trying to understand. That way, you have time to review it and wrap your mind around it before making a decision.



Village Tip: If she doesn't understand, but is afraid to ask, encourage her by saying, "Let's ask together." Sometimes knowing someone is by your side makes a big difference.

You Can Ask / Say:

- “Can you show me the research you are referring to?”
- “Please document that I am waiting for you to provide evidence based reasoning and research. Therefore, I am unable to make an informed decision at this time.”

Medication Minute

 Know the name of every medication you receive.

 Ask what it is being recommended for before taking it.

 Disclose all medicines, vitamins, supplements, and herbs you use.

 Mention any allergies or previous reactions to the suggested medication.

 Before accepting a medication remind them if you are pregnant, nursing, or donating your milk.

 Labor Preparation: If you plan to request or accept medication during labor or postpartum, ask how it may affect you, your baby, labor progress, or breastfeeding.

 Know which effects are expected and which require immediate medical attention.

Remember to Use the B.R.A.I.N.E.D. Acronym to Help Guide You

www.EarthsNaturalTouch.com

Understanding Models of Care

The Medical Model of Care

The medical model views pregnancy and birth primarily through a clinical lens. Pregnancy is monitored closely for complications, and interventions are used when providers believe they will improve outcomes, sometimes even when the evidence says differently. Obstetricians are specially trained to identify and treat medical complications, perform surgery, and care for high-risk pregnancies. The medical model can be lifesaving when complications arise. However, depending on the setting, some families may experience shorter appointments, less continuity of care, or greater use of interventions.

Strengths

- Excellent for high-risk pregnancies
- Specialized expertise
- Advanced medical technology
- Diagnosis and Management of complex conditions
- Easy access to surgery and emergency care



The Midwifery Model of Care

The midwifery model recognizes pregnancy and birth as normal, physiologic life events for most healthy people while watching for and working to prevent complications that would require medical intervention. Midwives emphasize education, prevention, informed decision-making, individualized care, and building trusting relationships with clients and their families. Midwives consult with or transfer care to physicians including Maternal Fetal Medicine, and pediatricians whenever complications that require a higher level of medical expertise arise.

Strengths

- Longer appointments
- Greater emphasis on education
- Shared decision-making
- Continuity of care
- Personalized support
- Focus on physiologic birth when appropriate
- Family-centered care
- Midwives support births in hospital or when appropriate, in out-of-hospital settings

Things to Know

Every pregnancy is unique. Some people appreciate highly medicalized care, while others prefer a more relationship-centered approach when their pregnancy is healthy. Excellent maternity care can exist in hospitals, birth centers, and home birth settings when providers practice evidence-based, respectful, patient-centered care.

You Know Your Body: You are the Expert of You



Before pregnancy, you knew your body. You knew your normal energy, appetite, sleep, emotions, aches, and rhythms. You knew when something felt different, even if you couldn't explain exactly why.

Pregnancy and postpartum changes don't take that knowledge away. You continue to recognize what is normal for you, what has changed, and when something doesn't feel right. Healthcare professionals bring education, training, testing, and clinical expertise to your care, while you bring a lifetime of experience with your own body. Your lived experience is your expertise. You don't have to look sick, know why something is happening, diagnose yourself, use medical terminology, or prove to them that something is wrong. Your observations are important information.

You are the expert on your experience, and your healthcare team brings expertise about health, pregnancy, birth, and medical care. These forms of knowledge can work together.

Your job isn't to diagnose yourself. It is to communicate what you are experiencing so your healthcare team can listen, evaluate, explain, and help determine what comes next.

Sometimes a change will be a normal part of pregnancy or postpartum recovery, and sometimes it may need further evaluation. You don't have to know which one it is before speaking up. If something feels different or concerning, it is okay to say,

"This is different for me and I need you to look into this. What tests can be done?"



Village Tip: Before baby arrives, learn the Maternal and Infant Warning Signs together.

Preparation helps everyone recognize, ask questions & respond more confidently if concerns arise.



Sis, Your instincts matter. If something doesn't feel right, don't ignore it. Ask questions. Your Lived Expertise and Their Medical Expertise Can Work Together.



When to Seek Medical Care



Whether you are pregnant, in labor, or recently gave birth, don't wait to seek care if you experience any of the following. Some of these things can be normal, but some can indicate something serious. This list does not include every possible emergency. So, if something feels seriously wrong or different from your normal, seek medical attention and tell the healthcare team that you are pregnant or have been pregnant within the last year.

Sis, Don't Let Them Turn You Away!

- **Severe or persistent nausea and vomiting.** Some nausea and vomiting is expected during pregnancy. However severe nausea and vomiting is concerning, especially when you cannot keep fluids down, are becoming dehydrated, feel faint or extremely weak, or are unable to eat or drink at all.
- **Vaginal bleeding during pregnancy.** Bleeding during pregnancy deserves a call to your provider. It may not be anything serious, but could be something that requires immediate attention.
- **Vaginal discharge or Fluid leaking from the vagina** before labor such as a sudden gush or continuous leaking of fluid or increased discharge.
- **Severe or worsening abdominal, pelvic, or upper abdominal pain,** particularly sudden or persistent pain, severe pain under the ribs / in the upper-right belly area, or pain accompanied by bleeding, headache, vomiting, or feeling faint.
- **Regular contractions, pelvic pressure, cramping, or low back pain** especially when they are lasting longer, becoming stronger, closer together, or accompanied by fluid leakage or bleeding.
- **Severe headache** that won't go away or is getting worse, especially a sudden headache that does not improve with recommended treatment, or a headache accompanied by dizziness, vision changes, swelling, or high blood pressure.
- **Changes in vision.** Blurred vision, seeing spots or flashing lights, double vision, temporary loss of vision, or other sudden changes should be immediately reported and evaluated.
- **Blood pressure of 140/90 mmHg or higher.** Even if your baseline is normally higher than the typical 120/80 mmHg, a reading 140/90 mmHg or higher should be reported to your provider. Don't assume that the reading is just a fluke. Don't wait for it to get worse before reporting it.
- **Chest pain, pressure, or tightness,** especially with shortness of breath, sweating, nausea, dizziness, or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- **Trouble breathing or sudden shortness of breath,** especially if it occurs while you are at rest, comes on suddenly, or is accompanied by chest pain, fainting, or a racing heart.

- **Exhaustion.** Pregnancy can make you tired. You are literally building and growing a new human. But if you are suddenly very tired and weak, and don't have enough energy to go about your day, you should report this. If you are tired when you get up in the morning or too tired to care for your baby, call your provider. They can do many tests including bloodwork.
- **Fainting, loss of consciousness, severe dizziness, confusion, or new weakness.** This may or may not be accompanied by headache, vision changes, bleeding, chest pain, shortness of breath, or a fast heartbeat.
- **Seizures** during pregnancy or after birth require immediate medical attention. If you have uncontrolled epilepsy, you should be seen.
- **Significant decrease in movement.** Once you regularly feel your baby move, a noticeable change should be evaluated promptly rather than waiting for your next appointment.
- **Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher** with feeling very ill, this may or may not be accompanied by chills, severe abdominal pain, foul-smelling vaginal discharge, breast redness and pain, urinary symptoms, or worsening wound/incision pain.
- **Severe swelling of the face or hands**, particularly with headache or vision changes.
- **Swelling, redness, warmth, or significant pain in one leg**, particularly if it occurs suddenly or is accompanied by chest pain or difficulty breathing. Do not rub it.
- **Heavy bleeding after birth.** Some bleeding is expected after delivery and is called lochia. It normally begins as red and gradually becomes lighter over the following weeks. Heavy, rapidly increasing, gushing bleeding, large clots, or bleeding accompanied by dizziness, weakness, fainting, pale/clammy skin, or a racing heart is not normal and requires urgent evaluation.
- **Severe or worsening postpartum abdominal pain / uterine tenderness**, particularly when accompanied by fever, chills, heavy bleeding, foul-smelling discharge.
- **Foul-smelling postpartum vaginal discharge.** Postpartum blood (lochia) has a normal blood/menstrual-like odor, but a distinctly foul or offensive odor, particularly with fever, chills, or uterine tenderness / abdominal pain, can indicate infection.
- **Severe perineal pain (external vaginal pain)** or rapidly increasing swelling after vaginal birth, especially pain that is getting worse rather than better, significant swelling, a feeling of pressure, heavy bleeding, or increasingly painful repair.
- **Cesarean incision.** If the incision is red, hot, swollen, painful, opens, is bleeding or draining pus or foul smelling fluids, opens or separates, get seen immediately.
- **Sudden or severe pain after cesarean birth.** Severe abdominal pain that is worsening rather than improving or pain that occurs with fever, heavy bleeding, shortness of breath, fainting, or other concerning symptoms.
- **Severe breast pain** with redness, swelling, fever, chills, or flu-like symptoms. Breastfeeding can involve fullness, tenderness, and engorgement, but significant systemic illness or rapidly worsening symptoms require prompt evaluation for infection or other complications, particularly if accompanied by fever, spreading redness, significant swelling, sharp, shooting pain, or drainage.
- **Skin.** Extreme Itching particularly on hands and feet without any rash. Yellowing skin.

- **Excretory issues.** Difficulty urinating, pain/burning with urination, dark urine, pale stools. This may or may not be accompanied by fever, back pain, chills, or feeling sick.
- **Severe headache after an epidural or spinal procedure**, especially a headache that becomes significantly worse when sitting or standing and improves when lying down. Contact your maternity care team promptly. Severe symptoms or neurological changes warrant urgent evaluation.
- **Sudden severe swelling or rapid weight gain** after birth accompanied by headache, vision changes, shortness of breath, or upper abdominal pain
- **Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby.** This does not mean you are a bad parent. But, it should not be taken lightly. You do not have to act on the thought for it to require immediate attention. Tell someone you trust and seek emergency help. Connect to a perinatal mental health professional.
- **Feeling disconnected from reality**, experiencing hallucinations, severe confusion, paranoia, or extreme agitation. These can be signs of a perinatal psychosis, which is a psychiatric emergency requiring immediate treatment.
- **A severe allergic reaction** after a medication, injection, food, or other exposure such as swelling of the lips, tongue, face, or throat, difficulty breathing, wheezing, widespread hives, fainting, or rapidly worsening symptoms require emergency treatment.
- **Anything that makes you think, "Something is seriously wrong."** You know your baseline. You know your normal. You know your body. You do not need to identify the diagnosis before asking for help. When you go, you can simply say, "I know my body, and something isn't right. I need to be evaluated." CDC and American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) specifically encourage patients to seek care when something feels unusual or concerning, even when the symptom does not fit neatly into a checklist.

♥ *Sis, Remember. You don't have to prove that something is wrong before you seek care. Your job (along with your village) is to notice any concerning changes and to communicate them. Your healthcare team's job is to evaluate you, determine what may be happening, and explain what comes next.*



"If you feel like something isn't right, or you aren't sure if it's serious, talk to your health care provider. Be sure to tell them if you are pregnant or were pregnant within the last year." - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Understanding Preeclampsia

Sis, Don't Let them turn you away

Lingering
Headaches

Pain in the
Upper Right
Belly area
near Ribs

Changes in
your Vision

Sudden,
Rapid Weight
Gain

Suddenly
Do Not
Feel Well

Trouble
Breathing

Shoulder Pain

Swelling in
the Legs,
Hands or
Feet

CHECK YOUR
BLOOD
PRESSURE

**MATERNAL
WARNING SIGNS**

High Blood
Pressure
and / or
Protein in
your urine

Nausea
and / or
Vomiting

A LOVE
NOTE
FOR YOU





SIS. DON'T LET THEM TURN YOU AWAY.

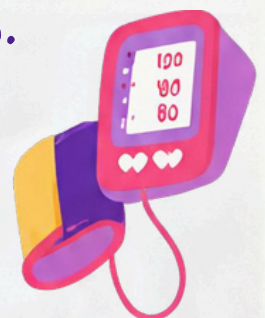


Preeclampsia is a serious complication of pregnancy that disproportionately affects Black women during pregnancy and the postpartum period. If left untreated, the condition can lead to organ damage and even death. This disparity is rooted not in race itself, but in systemic racism, chronic stress, and inequitable access to quality healthcare. At Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care and Beyond, Inc., our doulas and perinatal health advocates are deeply committed to addressing these injustices by providing culturally grounded, continuous support, education, and advocacy for Black families. We work to recognize early signs during pregnancy and the postpartum period, and encourage informed choice conversations between our clients and their providers.



Sis. Don't Let Them Turn You Away. You know when something is just not right. Don't ignore it! We want you & your baby to be well. We need you!

ENT



WHY PREECLAMPSIA DESERVES TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY

Preeclampsia does not affect all communities equally. Black mothers in the United States experience higher rates of severe preeclampsia and are more likely to experience serious complications including stroke, kidney failure, heart or lung complications, and death when they have preeclampsia. Research increasingly points to racism and structural inequities in healthcare, rather than race itself, as important contributors to these disparities. Black mothers have also described experiences of having symptoms minimized, concerns dismissed, or their pain and experiences questioned. It is important to know that preeclampsia can even develop or become apparent after birth, and symptoms such as a severe or persistent headache, vision changes, swelling, abdominal or upper-right-sided pain, shortness of breath, chest pain, or high blood pressure deserve prompt attention. If you know something has changed and you are concerned, don't assume that being told "it's normal" means you have to ignore what your body is telling you. Ask questions, explain what has changed, and seek further evaluation when your concerns have not been resolved.



SIS, IF YOU SUSPECT PREECLAMPSIA...



"I'm concerned about preeclampsia. What are the diagnostic criteria, and do any of my symptoms or test results meet those criteria?"

What is making you concerned about preeclampsia? If you think you have symptoms, list them here.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

You can also ask:

- What is my blood pressure & is that a safe reading when evaluating for preeclampsia?
- Have my blood pressure readings been elevated 2 hours apart?
- Have you checked my urine for protein?
- Have my platelets been checked?
- Have my kidney and liver function been evaluated?
- Are my symptoms consistent with preeclampsia or another condition?
- If none of these are indicative of preeclampsia, what condition(s) are my symptoms associated with?
- If I am sent home, what is the follow-up plan?

When Your Concerns Are Not Taken Seriously



For a long time, Black mothers have experienced inequities in maternity care, including having symptoms and concerns underestimated, dismissed, or attributed to factors other than a potentially serious medical problem. At the same time, Black patients can experience heightened surveillance in some areas, such as drug testing or assumptions about substance use, while their reports of pain, symptoms, or changes in how they feel may not receive the same urgency. Clinical attention is not always applied fairly,

consistently, and based on the person's actual symptoms and medical needs. You should not have to become more sick, more distressed, or have more persistent symptoms before your concerns are taken seriously.

You Don't Have to Know the Diagnosis

You're the expert of your body, but you don't have to walk into an emergency room saying, "I have preeclampsia." You probably don't have access to running all of your own medical tests. So, you can't actually diagnose yourself. You have to depend on medical providers to do all of the clinical care for you.

You can say something like: *"I'm ___ weeks pregnant, and I have a severe headache and vision changes. This is not normal for me. I would like to be evaluated."*

You don't have to diagnose a blood clot. You can say, *"One of my legs is suddenly swollen and painful and I just gave birth ___ days ago. I would like to be evaluated."*

You can also ask:

- "What are you considering as possible causes?"
- "What are you doing to rule out something serious?"
- "What testing would help determine what is happening?"
- "If you're not concerned, can you explain why?"
- "What is the most in-depth test you could run to evaluate me and why aren't you opting for it?"
- "What should I watch for if I go home?"
- "If you're concerned about one possibility, what other causes are you considering?"

♥ **Sis, Your Symptoms Deserve Assessment.**
You don't need to convince someone that you are "sick enough" to deserve evaluation.



Village Tip: If she expresses concerns about a symptom, take her seriously. Encourage her to contact her healthcare provider rather than dismissing how she feels.



Ask that all interactions be documented in your chart. Your visit may be A.I. transcribed.

When You Feel Something Is Being Missed, Dismissed, or Misdiagnosed

You do not need to be a medical professional to ask how a diagnosis was reached. If you are concerned about a condition, or if you are being told that you have a condition you don't understand, you can ask your healthcare provider to explain the diagnostic criteria, evidence, testing, and reasoning behind the assessment and diagnosis.

You can ask:

- *"What are the diagnostic criteria for this condition?"*
- *"What is your differential diagnosis?" / "Are there other conditions that could explain my symptoms?"*
- *"What tests could be run to determine what the cause of my symptoms is?"*

Then ask:

- *"Which of those criteria do I meet?" / "Which criteria do I not meet?"*
- *"What findings led you to this diagnosis and are those the standard criteria for diagnosis?"*
- *"What other conditions could cause these symptoms?"*
- *"What tests would help confirm or rule out this condition?"*
- *"Have those tests been done?" / "If so, what did the results show?"*
- *"Are there additional tests that are use? What is the most in-depth? Why arn't w doing that?"*
- *"Could you explain my results to me in plain language?"*
- *"What would you expect to see if this were the condition we're concerned about?"*
- *"If the test is negative, does that completely rule it out?"*
- *"Could this condition develop or change after this test?"*
- *"What should I watch for at home?" / "When should I come back or call again?"*

Instead of telling your provider: *"I know I have preeclampsia."*

You could say, "I'm concerned about preeclampsia. What are the diagnostic criteria, and do any of my symptoms or test results meet those criteria?"

When You Feel Dismissed

If you've explained your concern, and still don't feel heard, you don't have to settle.

"I hear what you're saying. I'm still concerned because this is different from my normal. Can you explain what you're doing to make sure something serious isn't being missed?"

If appropriate:

- *"I'd like another clinician to evaluate me."*
- *"I'd like a second opinion."*

Asking, "What would have to happen for you to become concerned?" helps you understand the provider's clinical reasoning and gives you some information about what they are thinking about. It also helps you monitor for those symptoms.

♥ ***Sis, you're not refusing treatment because you want to understand the diagnosis and the evidence supporting it before you make decisions about your care."***



Understanding the Plan

You can ask for more information to better understanding the plan

- Can you help me understand why this is the recommended plan?
- Would any tests help clarify what's going on?
- Can you explain why additional testing isn't recommended at this time?
- Is there anything I should do or avoid doing until I'm feeling better?



Caring for Yourself at Home

When you are discharged, be sure you review and understand the instructions they give you.

- What should I monitor once I get home?
- Should I check my blood pressure, temperature, bleeding, swelling, baby's movements, or anything else? If so, how often?
- What warning signs should make me call you or return immediately?
- If my symptoms get worse tonight or over the weekend, who should I contact?
- Where should I go if I need care after your office is closed?
- When should I expect to start feeling better?
- When should I schedule my next follow-up appointment?
- Can you review my discharge instructions with me one more time?



When you go home, continue to pay attention to your symptoms. Sometimes test results are reassuring, but your symptoms continue or change. If that happens, don't ignore what you're experiencing.

Write your Symptoms, Changes and Questions Here...

Green Light, Yellow Light, Red Light Conversations



- **Green Light:** You've received enough information to make informed decisions.
 - Your questions are welcomed.
 - Benefits, risks, and alternatives are explained.
 - You understand why a recommendation is being made.
 - Your concerns are acknowledged and options are explained.
 - You know what happens next and when to seek help.
- **Yellow Light:** You received information, but not enough. Ask for more information.
 - You still don't understand the recommendation.
 - You feel rushed.
 - Medical terms are confusing.
 - You aren't sure what your options are.
 - You need time to think or involve your support person.
- **Red Light:** Consider asking for another provider, or escalating your concern.
 - Your questions are repeatedly dismissed without explanation.
 - You are discouraged from asking questions or seeking clarification.
 - You are treated disrespectfully or feel discriminated against.
 - You still do not receive enough information to make an informed decision.
 - You believe your symptoms or concerns are not being appropriately evaluated.

Pay Attention to How You Feel

Sometimes it's not one specific word or action that concerns you. It's the overall interaction.

Ask yourself:

- Were my questions welcomed?
- Did I feel listened to?
- Did I understand the answers?
- Did I feel rushed?
- Did I leave feeling more informed than when I arrived?
- Was I given an opportunity to participate in decisions?

If the answer to several of these questions is "no," consider asking additional questions, requesting clarification, involving your support person, or changing providers.

♥ *Sis, You don't have to wait for any conversation to become disrespectful before you advocate for yourself. If you feel confused, dismissed, rushed, or pressured, pause and ask for clarity.*



Village Tip: *Be the calm beside her. If a conversation becomes difficult, your role isn't to speak over her or create more conflict. Help her stay grounded, take notes, repeat questions, ask for clarification, and make sure her concerns are addressed. Sometimes the most powerful support is simply saying, "She has explained that this is different from her normal. Can we pause and make sure her concern has been addressed?"*

Other Ways to Advocate for Yourself

Learn Before You Need It

 Knowledge is one of your greatest advocacy tools.

Consider taking:

- Childbirth education classes
- Breastfeeding/chestfeeding classes
- Newborn care classes
- Infant CPR
- Postpartum planning classes
- Sibling classes



Learning before birth can make it easier to ask informed questions.

Create Your Birth Vision (Birth Preferences Plan)

My Birth Vision

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

 Think about:

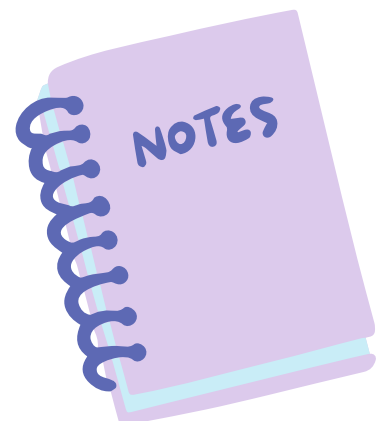
- Who you want and don't want present
- Pain Management / Coping Techniques options
- Labor Interventions
- Labor Positions
- Newborn Procedures
- Feeding Preferences
- Cultural or spiritual practices
- Other things that may be important to you

Creating a vision for your birth helps identify & communicate what matters most to you, while recognizing that plans may need to change based on medical circumstances.

Keep Your Own Records

 Consider keeping a notebook or digital journal with:

- Appointment dates
- Blood pressure readings (if monitoring at home)
- Questions for your provider
- Symptoms you've experienced
- Test results
- Medication changes
- Ultrasound findings
- Baby's movement and heartrate patterns
- Names of providers you see



Having your own records can help you identify and communicate changes over time and remember important details.

ENT's Self-Care

Bingo



Mark the ones you've done today!

Remember to Take Care of Yourself, Too. Community Care is Part of Self-Care.
Self-care is not selfish. It is one way to care for your baby.

Consider:

- Resting when possible
- Nourishing your body
- Staying hydrated
- Taking breaks
- Delegating Responsibilities
- Setting boundaries
- Protecting your mental health
- Celebrating small victories
- Asking & Accepting help

take
care
of
YOURSELF

Drank
plenty
water

Took several
deep breaths

Went
outside for
fresh air

Talked to
Your Baby

Ate Healthy,
Nutritious
Foods

Stretched
for a few
minutes

Had a
moment of
Gratitude

Gave
yourself a
compliment

Rested
without
guilt



Perinatal Bill of Rights for Black Families



Know What You Deserve

Respectful maternity care begins with understanding that you have rights, not only as a patient, but as a person deserving compassion, dignity, and informed decision-making.

*The **Perinatal Bill of Rights for Black Families**, developed by Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc, serves as a guide to help families understand what they should expect throughout pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period. While these rights are especially important in addressing the inequities that disproportionately affect Black families, every pregnant person deserves care that is respectful, culturally responsive, and centered on their individual needs.*

Your rights include the right to:

- *Be treated with dignity, respect, and compassion.*
- *Be heard when you express concerns about your health or your baby's well-being.*
- *Receive clear explanations in the language you understand.*
- *Ask questions and receive honest, evidence-informed answers.*
- *Participate in decisions about your care through informed consent and informed refusal.*
- *Request additional information or a second opinion if you have unanswered questions.*
- *Have a support person of your choosing present whenever possible.*
- *Receive care that is free from discrimination and bias.*
- *Access resources that support your physical, emotional, and mental well-being.*
- *Be an active participant in decisions affecting your pregnancy, birth, and postpartum experience.*

Read the Complete Perinatal Bill of Rights



Scan the QR code to read the full
Perinatal Bill of Rights for Black Families.

SCAN HERE





Resolving Concerns During Your Healthcare Experience



Most healthcare professionals are committed to providing safe, compassionate, and respectful care. If something doesn't feel right, it's often helpful to begin by asking questions and sharing your concerns with the members of your care team. Many misunderstandings can be resolved through open communication.

If your concern isn't addressed, or if you believe your safety, rights, or dignity are at risk, you have the right to ask for additional assistance.

Step 1: Document Your Experience

If you believe a significant concern occurred, write down:

- Dates and times
- Names and roles of those involved
- What happened
- What was said
- Questions you asked
- The responses you received
- Any witnesses
- Copies of discharge paperwork or other relevant documents

Clear documentation can be helpful if you decide to pursue a formal review.

Step 2: Speak with Your Nurse or Healthcare Provider

Many concerns can be resolved by discussing them directly with the person providing your care.

Consider saying things like:

- "I'd like to better understand your recommendation."
- "I'm still concerned about my symptoms."
- "Can we talk through my options together?"
- "Can you explain why this is the recommended approach?"

Step 3: Request the Charge Nurse

If your concerns continue or you feel they haven't been addressed, you can ask to speak with the Charge Nurse, who helps oversee patient care during each shift.

A Charge Nurse may be able to:

- Clarify the plan of care.
- Address communication concerns.
- Coordinate discussions with additional members of the healthcare team.
- Help resolve misunderstandings.

Step 4: Ask to Speak with the Attending Physician, Midwife, or Clinical Supervisor

If you would like another explanation or additional medical guidance, you may request to speak with the supervising physician, attending physician, supervising midwife, department chief, or other clinical leader involved in your care.

Step 5: Contact the Patient Advocate or Patient Relations Department

Most hospitals have a Patient Advocate or Patient Relations office whose role is to help patients and families resolve concerns about communication, quality of care, respect, or the overall patient experience. Patient advocates can often help facilitate conversations between patients and the healthcare team.

Step 6: Request Hospital Leadership

If your concerns remain unresolved, you may request to speak with hospital leadership, such as:

- Nurse Manager
- Department Director
- Unit Administrator
- Chief Nursing Officer
- Chief Medical Officer
- Hospital President or Chief Executive Officer (depending on the issue and the hospital's process)

Step 7: External Reporting (When Appropriate)

If you believe there were serious concerns related to patient safety, discrimination, professional conduct, or healthcare quality that were not adequately addressed by the hospital, you may consider contacting the appropriate external organization.

Depending on the situation, this may include:

- Your state's Department of Public Health or other healthcare licensing agency.
- The state licensing board for the healthcare professional involved (such as the medical, nursing, or midwifery licensing board).
- The hospital's accrediting organization, if applicable.
- Your health insurance plan, if the concern relates to coverage or access to care.
- Civil rights agencies if you believe discrimination occurred.
- An attorney if you believe you have experienced significant harm and are seeking legal advice.

In some situations, you may also choose to share your experience with advocacy organizations, community organizations, or the media. Consider doing so thoughtfully and with an understanding of privacy considerations and the potential impact of making personal health information public.

Remember: reporting a concern can help improve patient care, accountability, and safety for future families.

PRACTICE PREGNANCY & POSTPARTUM ADVOCACY



These are designed as "finish the conversation" exercises. There isn't always one perfect answer. The goal is to practice speaking up when you need to.

Practice #1 – You feel like something is wrong.

Provider: "Everything looks fine."

You can respond by saying: _____

Practice #2 – Consent

Provider: "We're going to induce you."

How would you respond? _____

Practice #3 – I Need Time

Provider: "We need your decision right now."

How can you ask for time to understand your options? _____

Practice #4 – I Have Questions

Provider: "That's nothing to worry about."

How would you respond? _____

Practice #5 – Explain It Another Way

You: "I don't understand."

What could you say next? _____

Practice #6 – Your symptoms have changed and you feel worse.

"I'm feeling worse than yesterday." *Tip: Remember to say how many weeks pregnant you are or how long ago you gave birth (or miscarried).

How would you explain that? _____

Practice #7 – I Need to Be Heard

"I don't feel like my concerns have been addressed."

What would you say next? _____

Practice #8 – Please Document It. "I understand your recommendation."

What would you say if you wanted your concerns documented?

Practice #9 – I Need Another Opinion.

Practice asking for another provider. _____

Practice #10 – I'm Not Comfortable. Complete the sentence.

"I'm not comfortable with this because..." _____

Practice #11 – Help Me Understand

Write three ways to ask for clarification.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Practice #12 – Repeat Back. Practice explaining your symptoms in your own words.

"My symptoms started..." _____

Practice #13 – Before I Agree - Complete the questions.

What are the benefits of... ? _____

What are the risks of... ? _____

What are my alternatives to... ? _____

Practice #14 – If I Go Home - Finish the sentence.

"If I go home today, what symptoms should make me come back immediately?" _____

Practice #15 – I Want to Include My Support Person

How could you ask your provider to include your partner, doula, or support person in the conversation? _____

Your Thoughts: _____

Tips for Healthcare Providers: Communication Can Build Partnership

The Language We Use Matters

Healthcare professionals play an important role in shaping how patients experience care, through their clinical expertise, and through the words they use when engaging patients and families. Using clear, respectful, person-centered language in conversations, medical documentation, and communication with colleagues can help build trust, reduce stigma and perceived power imbalances, and support shared decision-making. Small changes in language can foster dignity, strengthen therapeutic relationships, and ensure that medical records accurately reflect a person's experience without assigning blame, judgment or bias.

Sometimes the same concern can be communicated in very different ways. Here are examples of language that may unintentionally feel dismissive, followed by examples that encourage understanding and collaboration.

Instead of saying things like, "You're being difficult.", try having a more collaborative conversation, which might sound like... "I can see your concerns haven't been fully addressed yet. Let's talk through them together."

Instead of saying things like, "You just need to trust me.", try having a more collaborative conversation, which might sound like... "Let me explain why I'm making this recommendation and answer your questions."

Instead of saying things like, "That's normal.", try having a more collaborative conversation, which might sound like... "Many people experience this, but let's talk about what's happening and what symptoms would concern me."

Instead of saying things like, "Stop worrying.", try having a more collaborative conversation, which might sound like... "I understand why this is concerning. Let's review what we're seeing and what to watch for."

Instead of saying things like, "You're refusing care.", try having a more collaborative conversation, which might sound like... "You've decided not to move forward with this recommendation right now. Let's review your other options and discuss a follow-up plan."

Instead of saying things like, "I'm going to check you.", try having a more collaborative conversation, which might sound like... "I'd like to perform a cervical examination to see if your cervix is changing and to try to determine the babies position. Is that okay? Would you like me to explain what the exam involves first?"

The Language We Use Matters

Instead of saying things like, “I’m going to get your pitocin started.”, try having a more collaborative conversation, which might sound like... We recommend starting Pitocin to help your labor progress. Can we talk about why we're recommending it, the benefits and risks, and your alternatives?

Instead of saying things like, "You're noncompliant.", try having a more collaborative conversation, which might sound like... "Let's talk about what made this plan difficult to follow and whether another approach might work better for you."

Instead of saying things like, "Everything is fine.", try having a more collaborative conversation, which might sound like... "Based on today's evaluation, I don't see signs of an emergency. Here's why, and here's what would make me want you to return."

Instead of saying things like, "That's just anxiety.", try having a more collaborative conversation, which might sound like... "Stress can certainly affect how we feel, but let's make sure we've considered other possible causes of your symptoms too."

Instead of saying things like, "We've already talked about this.", try having a more collaborative conversation, which might sound like... "I'm happy to review it again. This is important, and I want to make sure you understand your options."

Try to Reframe Patient Choice

- People are not “refusing care” when they request to make an informed decision.
- People are not “noncompliant” because the plan you offer does not meet their needs.
- People are not “drug-seeking” for asking for relief from pain or requesting additional pain management. Their pain is real and deserves assessment.
- People are not a “difficult patient” because they have unresolved concerns or additional questions.
- Their induction did not “fail” because their labor didn’t start. Their body just wasn’t ready.
- Consider the words you use in your documentation. You may usually say they “refused care”, but they do have the right to decline” a procedure, medication or other intervention.



More Ideas for Collaborative Conversations...

- Ask what brought them in today. Don't assume you already know the reason for the visit. Ask: “What questions or concerns did you come in with today?”
- Ask whether they brought questions with them. “Did you come with any questions you'd like to make sure we have time to discuss today?” This gives patients permission to raise concerns before the appointment ends.
- Don't allow the support person to feel invisible. If a partner, doula, family member, or friend is present, recognize that they may have important observations or questions. With the patient's permission, invite them into the conversation.
- Ask what the patient has noticed. What changes have you noticed since your last visit?” Patients often notice changes before anyone else does.
- Ask what they understand so far. Before launching into an explanation, try: “What have you been told about this so far?” This prevents repeating information they already understand and helps identify misinformation or unanswered questions.
- Explain the reason behind recommendations. Don't simply say, “We're going to order this test.” Explain what question the test is intended to answer, what the possible results could mean, and what might happen next.
- Give patients time to process important information. A patient may need a moment before responding to a new diagnosis, medication, procedure, or recommendation. Silence isn't necessarily agreement or understanding. Ask: “Would you like a moment to think about that?”
- Before the patient leaves, ask: “What questions do you still have?” or “Is there anything we discussed that you would like me to explain differently?” Don't assume that having no questions means everything is understood.
- Remember that they are experts of their own bodies.



How do these ideas about changing your language make you feel?



ENT's Advocacy Glossary

Know the Language. Find Your Voice.



The Language We Use Matters

At Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc., we know that having the language to explain how you are feeling, what you are experiencing and what you deserve can help families better understand their rights, ask informed questions, recognize when something does not feel right, and participate more confidently in decisions about their care. You deserve to understand what these terms mean and how they relate to your experience. This glossary brings together important terms related to healthcare rights and communication, birth justice, and equity. Knowing these terms is one more tool you can carry with you as you advocate for yourself, your baby, and your family.

Healthcare Rights & Communication

Advocacy

Speaking up for yourself or someone else to help ensure concerns are heard, questions are answered, and care is respectful.

Autonomy

Your right to make decisions about your own body and healthcare after receiving appropriate information.

Bias

A belief or assumption that can influence decisions or behavior. Bias may be conscious or unconscious.

Consent

Permission given freely and voluntarily before a healthcare provider performs an examination, touches your body, gives medication, performs a procedure, or carries out another intervention. Consent should be informed, voluntary, specific to each offering, and ongoing. Consent is given after information about what is being proposed is explained and understood. Being pregnant, postpartum, in a hospital, in labor, or having previously agreed to a procedure does not mean you have automatically agreed to everything that follows. Consent can be revoked at any time. This means that even if you have given consent, you change your mind and take it back at any time.

Cultural Humility

An ongoing commitment to listen, learn, and respect each person's culture, values, beliefs, and lived experiences.

Doula-Friendly Hospital

A hospital that welcomes doulas as members of the patient's support team and has policies and practices that support their presence and role during pregnancy, labor, birth, and postpartum care. A doula-friendly hospital respects the value of continuous support and works collaboratively with doulas, patients, and healthcare professionals.



Informed Consent

Your provider explains the benefits, risks, alternatives, and possible outcomes of a recommendation before you voluntarily agree.

Informed Decision-Making

Making healthcare decisions after understanding the benefits, risks, alternatives, and possible consequences of each option, including doing nothing.

Informed Refusal (Informed Declination)

Your right to decline recommended care after understanding the possible benefits and risks.

Medical Gaslighting

When symptoms or concerns are dismissed, minimized, or not appropriately evaluated, making a person feel unheard or doubted.

Patient Advocate

Someone who helps you understand information, ask questions, communicate concerns, and navigate healthcare. This may be a family member, friend, doula, or hospital representative.

Patient-Centered Care

Healthcare that respects your values, preferences, culture, and goals while involving you in decisions.

Shared Decision-Making

A partnership in which you and your healthcare provider make healthcare decisions together using medical evidence and your personal values.

Testimonial Injustice

When a person's symptoms or experiences are given less credibility because of prejudice or assumptions.

Trauma-Informed Care

Healthcare that recognizes the effects of trauma and promotes safety, trust, collaboration, and respect.

Birth Justice & Equity

Birth Equity

Ensuring everyone has fair access to the care, resources, and opportunities needed for healthy pregnancy and birth outcomes.

Birth Justice

The belief that everyone deserves safe, respectful, culturally responsive, and equitable maternity care and the resources needed for healthy families.

Community Care

The shared responsibility of families, healthcare professionals, and communities to support healthy pregnancies, births, and postpartum recovery.

Implicit Bias

Unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that may influence decisions and interactions.

Medical Racism

The effects of racism on healthcare access, treatment, policies, or outcomes.

Microaggression

A subtle comment or action that communicates negative assumptions or stereotypes, even if unintended.

Mother-Blame Narrative

The belief that mothers alone are responsible for pregnancy or birth outcomes while overlooking healthcare systems and social factors.

Obstetric Racism

Racism experienced during pregnancy, birth, or postpartum through unequal treatment, stereotyping, dismissal, or discrimination.

Obstetric Violence

Disrespectful, coercive, abusive, or non-consensual treatment during maternity care.

Reproductive Justice

A human rights framework recognizing everyone's right to have children, not have children, and parent children in safe, healthy communities.

Respectful Maternity Care

Care that protects dignity, privacy, informed choice, and freedom from discrimination or abuse.

What Words or Terms Would You Add?
Are there any terms that describe your experiences?





More Than Support. A Community. A Movement.

For more than 10 years, Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc. has been working alongside families to make pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, and postpartum experiences more informed, supported, and rooted in community care.

We know that families deserve access to education, compassionate support, respectful care, and a village that shows up.

Our Mission

Our mission is to reduce maternal health disparities, promote perinatal wellness, support breastfeeding, and advance birth justice through education, doula support, advocacy, and community connection.

Our Approach

Our Approach Is Different. Our doula program is not the typical doula training designed to prepare someone to attend a birth. Our ENT Interdisciplinary Doula Training Program is 14+ months and provides an intentionally comprehensive education designed to prepare doulas to support families across a wide range of reproductive and perinatal experiences.

Our doulas learn about conception, normal and high-risk pregnancy, birth, postpartum, lactation, communication skills, advocacy, reproductive health, grief and loss, self-care and safety, the many circumstances families may encounter throughout their journeys and much more.

And because we know that doulas should continue growing beyond their initial training, our community doesn't have to end when a doula graduates. We work to provide continuing education, case review and community engagement opportunities.

We build doulas who continue learning, serving, connecting, and giving back.



Our Doulas Are Part of Something Bigger

Our featured doulas are more than birth support professionals. They are graduates of our program and members of a community committed to furthering the mission of Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc. while continuing to learn and grow as doulas.

They bring education, emotional and physical support, cultural awareness, advocacy, and community connection to the families they serve. They understand that a doula does not speak for you. A doula helps make sure you are heard.

Our doulas support you in asking questions, understanding information, communicating your preferences, preparing for birth and postpartum, and navigating your care while respecting that you remain the decision-maker about your body and your care. footprint.

Our Doulas Are Part of Something Bigger

Our work extends far beyond doula training.



Mocha Milkshake Café: A welcoming space for Black and Brown families to connect, learn, ask questions, and receive breastfeeding and lactation support with cultural understanding. Through support groups, education, and community connection, we work to make breastfeeding support more accessible and culturally responsive to our specific needs while addressing the access gap. At ENT, we know that being able to nurse your baby is not an individual responsibility. It is a community responsibility.



Childbirth Education: Our childbirth education opportunities help families prepare for labor, birth, newborn care, postpartum recovery, feeding, decision-making, and the unexpected turns that can sometimes come with birth.



Support Groups & Community Education: We offer support groups, classes, workshops, and community conversations covering topics throughout pregnancy and beyond including lactation, maternal wellness, birth preparation, postpartum support, grief and loss, mental health, nutrition, and other issues that matter to families.



Birth Justice & Advocacy: Improving birth outcomes requires more than telling individuals to advocate harder. It requires examining the systems in which care is provided. Through our birth justice and advocacy work, we educate families, participate in community and policy efforts, collaborate with local, state and national organizations, and work toward improving maternity care so that it is respectful, equitable, and responsive to the people receiving it.



Doula Skills: Beyond the Basics Program: Our ENT Interdisciplinary Doula Training Program is 14+ months is an intentional commitment that goes far beyond a typical doula training. Our students receive comprehensive education across a broad range of perinatal experiences while learning the importance of communication, cultural responsiveness, advocacy, community resources, lactation, birth justice, trauma informed support and more.

Our Doulas Are Part of Something Bigger

We have graduates and featured doulas in many states across the country. But now, as more states begin recognizing doula training organizations and establishing pathways for Medicaid reimbursement of doula services, Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc. is expanding its recognized training footprint.

We are proud to see our work recognized beyond our home community, and even prouder to bring our approach and unique framework with us.

When You Choose Us...

When you choose a doula from Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc., you aren't simply choosing someone to be beside you during labor. You are connecting with a community that believes in education, support, advocacy, birth justice, lactation, and the power of a village.

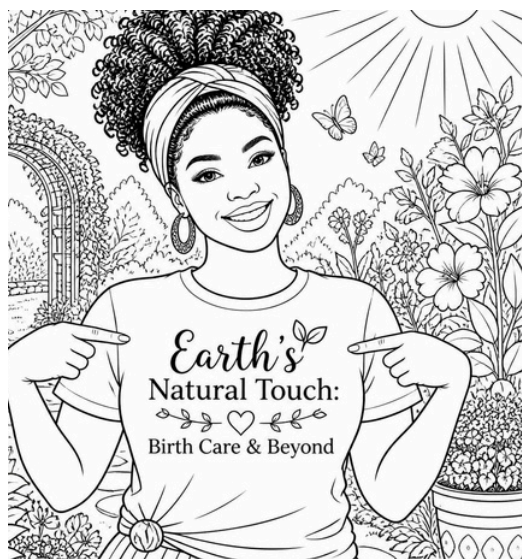
Whether you are preparing for your first baby, adding another member to your family, navigating an unexpected change, preparing for postpartum, working toward your breastfeeding goals, or simply looking for someone who will listen... we would be honored to be part of your village.

♥ Your Birth. Your Baby. Your Voice. Your Village.

Stay connected with [Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc.](#)

Follow us, join our programs and support groups, connect with our community, and learn more about our doula services and training opportunities.

You don't have to navigate this journey alone.



Mocha Milkshake Café - Lactation Support Group



MOCHA MILKSHAKE CAFÉ

Created during Black Breastfeeding Week 2020, Mocha Milkshake Café became ENTs Virtual Lactation Support Group. Through education, advocacy, and compassionate care, we strive to enhance breastfeeding knowledge, remove barriers, and promote a positive lactation experience. Our dedicated team is committed to creating communities where everyone feels supported, informed, and confident in their ability to provide the best start in life for their child through the beautiful act of breastfeeding. Mocha Milkshake Café: Lactation Support Group is 5 years old. It is a safe space specifically for Black and Brown families to learn, and share with their peers. Mocha Milkshake Café is a valuable resource for families to share experiences, receive support and guidance, and build a supportive community.

“The Mocha Milkshake Café is a special place. It is designed with and for Black women. What I love about Mocha Milkshake Café is the intention around co-creating a space with Black moms to share their experiences, successes, and challenges with guidance from ENT lactation counselors. This is a space rooted in love, community, and solidarity. We are rooting for our breastfeeding parents to connect with themselves and experiences in ways that feel authentic for them. There is no one size fits all approach. I wish I had a space like this when I started breastfeeding. This is why I wanted to become a CLC. And I am so happy to witness and hold the stories of others.” - Sade, eCID, CLC



Every Saturday
10am EST on Zoom

[PARENT REGISTRATION LINK](#)





Sis, Don't Let Them Turn You Away!



Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc.

Y	S	B	U	C	O	W	A	R	N	I	N	G	E	W
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BIRTH JUSTICE
DADBASSADOR
QUESTIONS
COMMUNITY
EDUCATION

WELLNESS
ADVOCACY
AUTONOMY
WARNING
CONSENT

DIGNITY
RESPECT
COURAGE
VILLAGE
MIDWIFE

SAFETY
LISTEN
EQUITY
VOICE
TRUST

SUPPORT







Earth's
Natural Touch:
— — — — —
Birth Care & Beyond

Nurture
Love
Empower







Earth's
Natural Touch:
Birth Care & Beyond



Nurturing
Mothers.
Honoring
Birth.
Supporting
Families.





Document your Blood Pressure

Add the Date, Time, and Blood Pressure Reading

Training
Doulas for
10 Years!!!

Interested in Becoming an ENT Community-Based Doula?

2027 Enrollment

Get An Early Start. The Sooner, The Better.

SPRING 2027 - COHORT 11

**Advanced Doula Skills:
Beyond the Basics - ENT
Interdisciplinary Doula Training Program**

Application Process and Essay Submission:
<https://earthsnaturaltouch.com/professional-trainings>

DEC 31

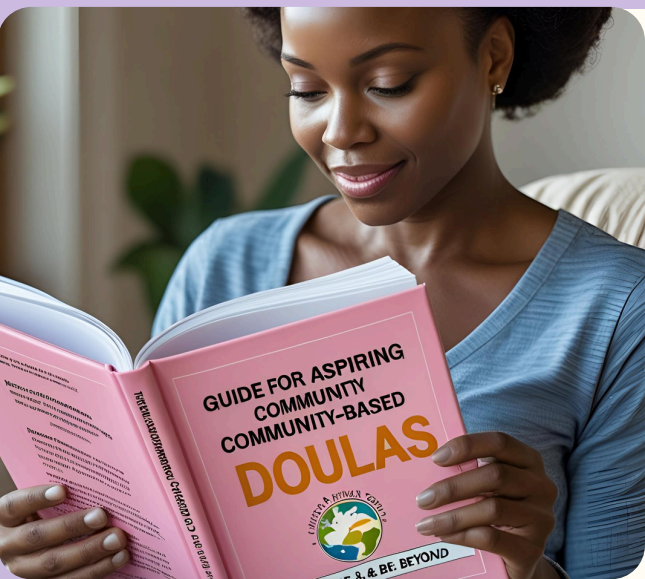
**Application
Essays Due!**



Our Doulas and Perinatal Health Advocates work to reduce the risk of unwanted pregnancy and birth outcomes while promoting complete perinatal wellness for parents and children. Additionally, we support breastfeeding advocacy for all families and aim to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in infant and maternal health within marginalized, underrepresented, and historically excluded communities.

We are the largest Black-Owned Doula Training Organization and Collective of Doulas and Perinatal Health Advocates in New England. We are based in Connecticut with Doulas currently serving MA, RI, NY, NJ, MD, VA, DC, PA, DE, FL, NC, GA, CA, NV

Aspiring Community Doula Guidebook



Whether you're just starting out, switching programs, or unsure if this path is a good fit, **this guide is for YOU.**

Learn more about our unique training, including:

- Tools to reflect on your values, vision and capacity
- Guidance on what to look for in a doula training program before making a choice
- Questions to ask and red flags to avoid when choosing a trainer or training program
- Insights on the maternal health systems crisis that we are up against
- Affirmations, tips, and reminders that you can be part of something big

Need Guidance? Get your copy of the ENT Guidebook for Aspiring Community-Based Doulas!

(<https://tinyurl.com/4m2yyw9u>)

To Your Guidebook, Scan this Code

Venmo: @ENTDoulas

Zelle: ENTDoulasFinance@gmail.com



venmo

Zelle



Follow to Get Updated Enrollment Info on Our Socials or Website

EarthsNaturalTouch.com



EarthsNaturalTouch



Facebook.com/EarthDoulas



Connect to the Community

RESOURCE LIST

How to Use the Resource Tags: The resource tags help you quickly identify the types of support each organization may offer to you, your baby, or your family. Some resources have more than one tag because they provide support in multiple areas. So be sure to read the description to learn how each organization may be able to help.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ♥ African-American Families | ♥ Loss & Grief |
| 👤 Fathers & Partners | 🛡️ Safety/Domestic Violence |
| 👩 Pregnancy & Postpartum | 🚒 Crisis |
| 👶 Breastfeeding & Lactation | 🏠 Basic Needs |
| 👶 Babies & Children | 🏠 Home Visiting/Parenting |
| 🧠 Mental Health | ⚖️ Advocacy/Health Equity |
| | 💰 Financial Support |

Connecticut-Based Resources for Mothers, Babies & Families

211 Connecticut — 🏠 👤 👩 🧠 🛡️

Need help but don't know where to start? 211 connects Connecticut families with food, housing, childcare, healthcare, crisis services, parenting support, and hundreds of other community resources.

Website: [211 Connecticut](https://www.211connecticut.org/) Phone: 2-1-1 or 1-800-203-1234

ACCESS Mental Health for Moms — 🧠 👤

ACCESS Mental Health for Moms provides specialized consultation to Connecticut healthcare providers caring for pregnant and postpartum patients experiencing mental health or substance-use concerns. Families can ask their provider about this resource when additional guidance is needed.

Website: [ACCESS Mental Health for Moms](https://www.accessmentalhealthfor moms.org/) / Phone: 833-978-MOMS (6667)

Baby Bonds — 💰 👤

If your Connecticut-born baby qualifies, the state automatically invests money into a Baby Bonds account that can later be used for approved expenses such as education, homeownership, starting a business, or retirement savings. There is no application or enrollment required for eligible children.

Website: [CT Baby Bonds](https://www.ct.gov/babybonds) / Phone: 860-702-3000

Birth to Three —

If you have concerns about your child's development, Connecticut's Birth to Three System can connect eligible children under age three with early intervention services. You do not have to wait for a diagnosis before asking about an evaluation. Website: [Connecticut Birth to Three](#) / Phone: 1-800-505-7000

Care 4 Kids —

Care 4 Kids helps eligible Connecticut families pay for childcare. Families can learn about eligibility, apply for assistance, and locate participating childcare providers. Website: [Care 4 Kids](#) / Phone: 1-888-214-KIDS (5437)

Community Alliance for Research & Engagement (CARE) New Haven —

CARE works with New Haven communities most affected by health disparities, including Black and Brown communities and low-income populations, through research, community engagement, and health equity initiatives. Website: [CARE New Haven](#) / Phone: Contact through website

Connecticut Office of Early Childhood — Home Visiting Programs —

Connecticut's home-visiting programs bring trained professionals into families' homes to provide support related to pregnancy, parenting, child development, health, safety, and family wellbeing. Programs include Nurse-Family Partnership, Healthy Families America, Child First, and other models, with eligibility varying by program.

Website: [CT Office of Early Childhood — Home Visiting](#) / Phone: 1-800-505-7000

Connecticut WIC —

WIC provides eligible pregnant and postpartum people, infants, and young children with nutrition assistance, breastfeeding support, nutrition education, and referrals to other services. Connecticut WIC also provides resources specifically for fathers and families.

Website: [Connecticut WIC](#) / Phone: 1-800-741-2142

CT Safe Connect —

If you or someone you love is experiencing domestic violence, trained advocates are available 24/7 to listen, help you consider your options, and connect you with local services. It serves as the entry point to Connecticut's domestic violence services and connects people with CCADV's 18 member organizations for ongoing local support. Support is free and confidential.

Website: [CT Safe Connect](#) / Phone: 1-888-774-2900

Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc. — 🤝 👩 👧 🧒 💜 👩 ⚖️

Earth's Natural Touch provides birth and postpartum doula services, lactation, fertility, bereavement, and other perinatal support to families throughout Connecticut and in multiple states across the country. ENT also offers the free virtual Mocha Milkshake Café support group for breastfeeding families and houses and leads the Doulas4CT Coalition.

Website: [Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc.](#) / Phone: [Contact through website](#)

Family Bridge — 👩 🧒 🏠 👩

Family Bridge connects eligible families with home-based support from nurses and community health workers who can help with newborn care, maternal wellbeing, parenting, diapers, and other family needs.

Website: [Family Bridge](#) / Phone: 860-500-4412

Breastfeeding Heritage and Pride — Hispanic Health Council — 👩 👧 💜

Breastfeeding Heritage and Pride provides culturally responsive, peer-based breastfeeding support and education, including support for families in English and Spanish.

Website: [Hispanic Health Council](#) / Phone: 860-527-0856

Mocha Milkshake Café — 💜 👩 👧 🧒

Mocha Milkshake Café is a free virtual breastfeeding/chestfeeding support community where families can ask questions, share experiences, and connect with other parents and perinatal professionals. It is especially intentional about culturally aligned support for Black and Brown families and is available beyond Connecticut.

Website: [Mocha Milkshake Café](#) / Phone: [Contact Earth's Natural Touch through website](#)

MotherToBaby CT — 👩 🧒

MotherToBaby CT provides free, confidential, evidence-based information about exposures during pregnancy and breastfeeding, including medications, alcohol and drugs, infections, medical conditions, chemicals, radiation, and workplace or environmental exposures. If you're pregnant, breastfeeding, planning a pregnancy, or concerned about an exposure, you can contact the service to speak with a teratogen information specialist or genetic counselor.

Website: [MotherToBaby CT at UConn Health](#) / Phone: 860-679-6199

New Haven Healthy Start — ❤️ 👩 👨 👶 🏠

New Haven Healthy Start supports families through pregnancy, birth, and the baby's first 18 months with referrals, parent education, lactation support, health insurance assistance, and support for fathers. The program specifically works to improve birth outcomes and address health disparities affecting New Haven families.

Website: [New Haven Healthy Start](#) / Phone: 203-777-7087

Parents Connecting Parents — 🏠 👩 👶 👨

Parents Connecting Parents connects expecting and current parents with Parent Ambassadors who can provide support, encouragement, and connections to community resources. The program operates in several Connecticut communities.

Website: [CT Parents Connecting Parents](#) / Phone: 860-500-4563

Postpartum Support International – Connecticut Chapter (PSI-CT) — 🧠 👩 💜 👨

PSI-CT connects Connecticut families with support and resources related to perinatal mental health, including support groups and referrals for parents and families during pregnancy and postpartum. PSI-CT is the Connecticut chapter of Postpartum Support International.

Website: [PSI-CT](#) / Phone: 1-800-944-4773 / [FOR HELP](#)

The Diaper Bank of Connecticut — 👶 🏠

The Diaper Bank works with community organizations throughout Connecticut to help families access diapers and other essential supplies. Families can use its distribution network to find a participating organization near them.

Website: [The Diaper Bank of Connecticut](#) / Phone: 203-934-7009

Waterbury Bridge to Success (BTS) — ❤️ 👩 👶 ⚖️

Waterbury Bridge to Success connects families and community partners with resources designed to improve outcomes for children and families from cradle to career, including its Black Maternal Health initiative and resources addressing pregnancy, postpartum care, maternal health, and family wellbeing. They partner with Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond to train Doulas in their community.

Website: [Waterbury Bridge to Success](#) / Phone: 203-754-0040

Yale New Haven Hospital

Certified Car Seat Technicians teach how to properly secure babies in their car seats as well as how to install the car seat correctly in the vehicle. Appointments offered at Yale New Haven Children's Hospital in New Haven, Bridgeport Hospital, Greenwich Hospital and Lawrence + Memorial Hospital.

Call for appointment 203-200-KIDS or email carseats@ynhh.org.



National Resources for Mothers, Babies & Families

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — 🚨 🧠

If you or someone you love is experiencing emotional distress, having thoughts of suicide, or facing a mental health or substance-use crisis, you can call or text 988 for free, confidential support 24/7. You do not have to be suicidal to reach out.

Website: [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) / Phone/Text: 988

Black Women's Health Imperative — ❤️ 👩 🧠 ⚖️

The Black Women's Health Imperative works to improve the health and wellbeing of Black women and girls through education, advocacy, research, and policy. Its resources address reproductive health, mental health, chronic conditions, and health equity.

Website: [Black Women's Health Imperative](#) / Phone: 202-787-5938

Crisis Text Line — 🚨 🧠

When you need someone to talk to during a difficult or overwhelming moment, you can text with a trained crisis counselor. Text HOME to connect with support.

Website: [Crisis Text Line](#) / Text: HOME to 741741

March of Dimes — 👩 👶 👩

March of Dimes provides pregnancy, newborn, NICU, postpartum, and family health information and resources. Families can also use its resources to learn about pregnancy complications and find support in their communities.

Website: [March of Dimes](#) / Phone: 1-888-MODIMES (663-4637)

National Center for Fathering — 👨

The National Center for Fathering provides practical information and resources designed to help fathers build stronger relationships with their children and become more intentional in their parenting. The center offers free micro-courses for dads.

Website: [National Center for Fathering](#) / Phone: 1-800-593-DADS (3237)

National Domestic Violence Hotline — 🛡️ 👨 👩 👶

If you or someone you love is experiencing domestic violence, confidential advocates can help you explore your options and connect with local services. Support is available by phone, text, and online chat.

Website: [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) / Phone: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Text: START to 88788

National Human Trafficking Hotline —

If you or someone you know may be experiencing sex or labor trafficking, trained advocates can provide confidential support and connect you with services. Interpretation is available in many languages.

Website: [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) / Phone: 1-888-373-7888 / Text: 233733

National Maternal Mental Health Hotline —

Pregnancy and the postpartum period can bring depression, anxiety, trauma, grief, or other emotional challenges. Pregnant and postpartum people and their families can call or text this free, confidential service 24/7.

Website: [National Maternal Mental Health Hotline](#) / Phone/Text: 1-833-943-5746

National Parent Helpline —

Parenting can be overwhelming, and asking for support does not make you a bad parent. The National Parent Helpline connects parents with support and resources to help them manage stress and strengthen their families.

Website: [National Parent Helpline](#) / Phone: 1-855-427-2736

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse / Fatherhood.gov —

Fatherhood.gov provides free information, tools, videos, and resources to help fathers become more involved in their children's lives. Families and fathers can also use the site to locate fatherhood programs and services.

Website: [Fatherhood.gov](#) / Phone: 1-877-432-3411

National Sexual Assault Hotline — RAINN —

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual assault or sexual abuse, trained support specialists are available 24/7 to listen, provide information, and connect you with local resources. You do not have to report to law enforcement to receive support.

Website: [RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline](#) / Phone: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Poison Control —

If a child accidentally swallows, inhales, or comes into contact with a potentially poisonous medicine, household product, plant, or other substance, call Poison Control right away for free expert guidance. Do not wait for symptoms to appear.

Website: [Poison Control](#) / Phone: 1-800-222-1222

Postpartum Health Alliance —

Postpartum Health Alliance provides education and resources related to pregnancy and postpartum mental health and helps families find support for concerns such as postpartum depression and anxiety.

Website: [Postpartum Health Alliance](#) / Phone: 619-254-0023

Postpartum Support International (PSI) — 🧠 👤 🧡

PSI provides support, education, support groups, and referrals for people experiencing perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, pregnancy or infant loss, and other emotional challenges. PSI also maintains a network of state and regional chapters.

Website: [Postpartum Support International](https://www.postpartumsupport.com) / Phone: 1-800-944-4773

SAMHSA National Helpline — 🧠 🚒

If you or someone in your family needs help with mental health or substance use, SAMHSA's National Helpline provides free, confidential information, treatment referrals, and connections to services.

Website: [SAMHSA National Helpline](https://www.samhsa.gov) / Phone: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Sisters in Loss — 🖤 🧡 👤 👶

Sisters in Loss provides culturally sensitive support and resources for Black women and families experiencing infertility, miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant loss. Families can find education, community, and support for navigating reproductive and pregnancy loss.

Website: [Sisters in Loss](https://www.sistersinloss.com) / Phone: Contact through website

Safe Kids Worldwide — 👶

Safe Kids provides practical information to help families prevent childhood injuries, including guidance on car seats, drowning, burns, falls, medication safety, and other common hazards.

Website: [Safe Kids Worldwide](https://www.safekids.org) / Phone: 202-662-0600

Resources Especially for Black Families, Fathers & Communities

100 Black Fathers — 🖤 👤 👶

100 Black Fathers promotes involved fatherhood, positive family relationships, health and wellness, character development, and stronger communities. The organization provides opportunities for Black fathers to connect and participate in community activities.

Website: [100 Black Fathers](https://www.100blackfathers.com) / Phone: 202-361-0761

Black Mamas Matter Alliance — 🖤 👤 🧡 ⚖️

Black Mamas Matter Alliance is a Black women-led organization working to advance Black maternal health, rights, and justice. Families can learn about Black-led maternal health advocacy, education, research, and community resources.

Website: [Black Mamas Matter Alliance](https://www.blackmamasmatteralliance.org) / Phone: Contact through website

Black Women's Health Imperative — ❤️ 🧑 🧠 ⚖️

The Black Women's Health Imperative works to improve the health and wellbeing of Black women and girls through education, advocacy, research, and policy. Its work includes reproductive health, mental health, and health equity.

Website: [Black Women's Health Imperative](https://www.bwhi.org/) / Phone: 202-787-5938

Dear Fathers — ❤️ 🧑 🧑 🧒

Dear Fathers is a community and media platform centered on Black fatherhood, family, and parenting.

Website: [Dear Fathers](https://dearfathers.com/) / Phone: Contact through website

Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc. — Community Support — ❤️ 🧑 🧑 🧒 🧠 ⚖️

Although Earth's Natural Touch is based in Connecticut, ENT supports families in multiple states and offers birth, postpartum, lactation, bereavement, and other perinatal services, including culturally responsive community programming. Fathers and partners can also participate in ENT's village-building and family-support initiatives.

Website: [Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc.](https://www.earths naturaltouch.com/) / Phone: [Contact through website](https://www.earths naturaltouch.com/)

Fathers, Families & Healthy Communities — ❤️ 🧑 🧒

Fathers, Families & Healthy Communities focuses on strengthening Black fathers, families, and communities through programs, resources, and support. Its work recognizes fathers as important contributors to children's and families' wellbeing.

Website: [Fathers, Families & Healthy Communities](https://www.fathersfamiliesandhealthycommunities.org/) / Phone: Contact through website

Get At Me Dad — ❤️ 🧑 🧑 🧒 🧠

Get At Me Dad provides education, fatherhood groups, one-on-one support, childbirth education, lactation resources, and support around mental, emotional, financial, and family concerns, with a particular focus on Black fathers and fathers of color.

Website: [Get At Me Dad](https://www.getatmedad.com/) / Phone: Contact through website

National Association to Advance Black Birth (NAABB) — ❤️ 🧑 🧒 ⚖️

NAABB works to improve the care and treatment of Black birthing people and babies through education, advocacy, research, and policy change. Families can also explore resources designed to help Black families understand and advocate for respectful, equitable maternity care.

Website: [National Association to Advance Black Birth](https://naabb.org/) / Phone: Contact through website

National Black Midwives Alliance — ❤️ 👩🏾 🧑🏾 ⚖️

The National Black Midwives Alliance supports Black midwives and works to strengthen access to culturally congruent midwifery care. Families can use its resources to learn more about Black midwifery and the people working to improve birth outcomes for Black families.

Website: [National Black Midwives Alliance](#) / Phone: Contact through website

New Haven Healthy Start — Fatherhood Services — ❤️ 👨🏾 👩🏾 🧑🏾

New Haven Healthy Start includes support specifically for fathers and has a Men's Consortium that provides a support network for men and fathers in the Greater New Haven area. Families can contact the Fatherhood Coordinator to learn about available services.

Website: [New Haven Healthy Start — Fathers](#) / Phone: 203-777-7085

Postpartum Support International — Perinatal Mental Health Alliance for People of Color — ❤️ 🧠 👩🏾 👨🏾

PSI's Perinatal Mental Health Alliance for People of Color works to improve access to culturally responsive perinatal mental health support for people and communities of color. Families can also use PSI's national HelpLine and provider directory to find additional support.

Website: [PSI — Perinatal Mental Health Alliance for People of Color](#) / Phone: 1-800-944-4773

Real Dads Network — ❤️ 👨🏾 🧑🏾

Real Dads Network provides Black fathers with support, resources, community, advocacy, and opportunities to connect with other fathers. Its work centers positive Black fatherhood and strengthening families and communities.

Website: [Real Dads Network](#) / Phone: 212-875-7725

Sisters in Loss — ❤️ 💜 👩🏾 🧑🏾

Sisters in Loss provides culturally sensitive support for Black women and families experiencing infertility, miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant loss. Families can find education, community, and resources for navigating reproductive and pregnancy loss. Website: [Sisters in Loss](#) / Phone: Contact through website

The Dad Gang — ❤️ 👨🏾 🧑🏾

The Dad Gang is a community created to connect Black fathers and challenge negative stereotypes about Black fatherhood. Fathers can connect through its online community, events, and father-focused activities.

Website: [The Dad Gang](#) / Phone: Contact through website



We're Here to Support You



Looking for a doula who will truly be in your corner? Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc. connects families with trained Interdisciplinary Doulas who provide compassionate, culturally responsive support throughout pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. Our doulas offer physical, emotional, informational, and practical support to help you prepare for birth, navigate unexpected changes, care for your baby, support feeding goals, and make decisions that feel right for you & your family.

In-person doula services are available in: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Nevada, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, California, Maryland, and Indiana. Virtual doula support is available wherever you are. Ready to find out if an ENT Doula is right for your family? Schedule your FREE consultation today through our [Contact page](#). [Schedule Your FREE Consultation](#)



Stay Connected with the ENT-Zine

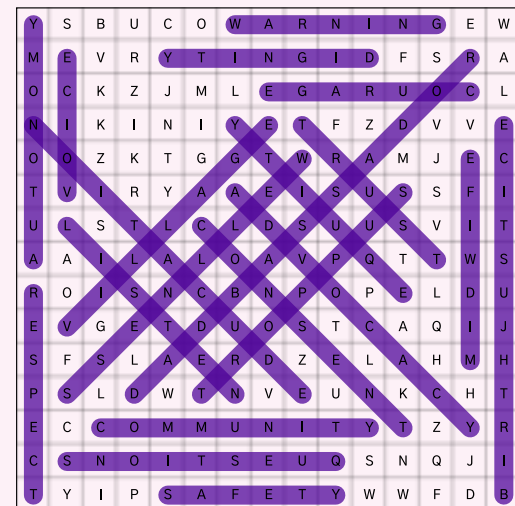
Stay connected with Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc. by [SUBSCRIBING TO THE ENT-ZINE](#), created to keep families, birth workers, and community members informed, connected, and engaged. Get updates on upcoming events, educational resources, birth justice and advocacy, community programs, breastfeeding support, doula opportunities, and the work we're doing to help families better understand and navigate their care. Subscribe to the ENT-Zine and stay in the know about what's happening in our community!



Thank you for standing with us and participating in the "Sis, Don't Let Them Turn You Away!" campaign. By learning, sharing, speaking up, and supporting one another, you are helping build a community where every family knows their voice matters and deserves to be heard. We invite you to keep learning, keep asking questions, and keep advocating for yourself and others.

Stay connected with Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc. for resources, events, advocacy opportunities, and ways to continue this work together.

www.EarthsNaturalTouch.com



Word Search Answers

Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, inc.



**Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond
is a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization!**

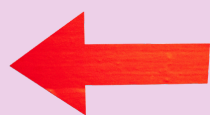


If this advocacy guidebook has been helpful to you as you navigate your pregnancy or postpartum period, we invite you to support our continued work by sharing our information and/or making a donation. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, your contribution helps us create accessible, culturally rooted training and resources for future doulas & families. Every donation, no matter the size, helps us grow this movement for birth justice. To make your donation, you can scan the QR code for Zeffy, or use Zelle or Venmo to stand with us in uplifting community-centered doula care.

No Amount is Too Little. We Appreciate You!

WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR COMMUNITY...



 ***Scan this code to donate***
Zelle - ENTDouglasFinance@gmail.com
Venmo - @ENTDouglas

Please Note how you would like your donation to be used.

- Towards this Guidebook and supporting Doula Training
- Towards Doula Support for Families
- Towards Educational Classes, Support Groups, and/or Events
- Whatever we have a need for to keep the organization running



/EarthDouglas www.EarthsNaturalTouch.com [@EarthsNaturalTouch](https://www.instagram.com/EarthsNaturalTouch)



Your "Sis, Don't Let Them Turn You Away" Bracelet

If you are pregnant or have given birth within the last year, wear your "Sis, Don't Let Them Turn You Away!" bracelet whenever possible.

Always tell every healthcare provider:
"I recently gave birth on ____."

or

"I am ____ weeks/months postpartum."



This information is important because some pregnancy-related conditions such as postpartum preeclampsia, blood clots, infection, heart conditions, and postpartum mental health emergencies can occur after birth, even if you're no longer in the hospital. Sharing that you've recently given birth helps your healthcare team evaluate your symptoms with the full picture in mind.

Before You Leave Home

- ☐ Put on your bracelet.
- ☐ Bring your insurance card.
- ☐ Bring your medication list.
- ☐ Bring your blood pressure log (if you have one).
- ☐ Bring your support person if possible.
- ☐ Bring this booklet.
- ☐ Tell every provider your Estimated Delivery Date or Date you Delivered

♥ *Sis, your voice deserves to be heard. Your concerns deserve thoughtful attention. Your family deserves respectful, compassionate care.*



**Scan Here
for
Resources**



♥ Sis, Don't Let Them
Turn You Away!

- ENT Doulas



Remember to Move, Nourish, and Flourish



Earth's Natural Touch: Birth Care & Beyond, Inc.
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