

What to Ask ... A Doula Who May Provide Continuous Labor Support

A labor support specialist—often called a “doula”—is with you during childbirth to help you stay calm and comfortable as you move through your birthing process, give you information about your care and help you achieve your goals. We encourage you to meet and talk with different doulas, and to print and bring this list of questions—and a notebook to write down answers and thoughts. Revisiting this tool throughout pregnancy as you learn more can help ensure your maternity care stays in step with your priorities (keep in mind that you can change care arrangements during pregnancy if you choose). Visit ChildbirthConnection.org/giving-birth/labor-support/ for more information about finding and working with a doula.

Background, Education and Philosophy

- What is your education for providing labor support?
- Are you certified by a labor support specialist training program?
- How long have you been in practice as a doula?
- How many births have you attended?
- Do you have education and experience providing any other types of care for childbearing women, such as childbirth education, midwifery care, nursing care, breastfeeding support or postpartum doula support?
- In providing doula services, what are your core values, priorities and goals?

- If you were looking for a doula to be with you at your birth, what would you look for?
- Have you provided doula services for other women who have used [*name of my midwife, doctor or practice*]? What was it like?
- Have you provided doula services for other women who have given birth at [*name of my hospital or birth center*]? What was it like?

Practice Organization

- What arrangements do you have for back-up if you are not available to attend my labor and birth?
- Can I meet the person who would serve as back-up?
- Is there anything you know about now that could make you unavailable around the time of the birth?
- Do you have other clients due around the same time?

Services and Approach

- Would you meet with me/us again before the birth to discuss our preferences and concerns?
- When would you come to be with me in labor?
- What services do you provide during labor and birth?
- What do you usually bring with you?
- How do you help women cope with labor pain?
- How do you help promote labor progress?

- How long would you stay with me after the birth?
- What is your role if I have an epidural? What about a cesarean?
- Do your services include any home visits after the birth?
- How would my partner/spouse fit in?
- How do you feel about [_____]? *(Ask about any concerns or preferences on your mind, like coping with pain.)*
- What are your greatest strengths?

Did You Know?

High-quality research suggests that a doula is likely to reduce your likelihood of cesarean birth and use of pain medication and increase your satisfaction with your childbirth experience, among other benefits.

Cost

- What is your fee and what does it include?
- Are there any possible extra costs that I should know about now?
- Do you have experience with reimbursement from health care plans? [If yes] Can you recommend what we could do to help secure reimbursement from my plan?

Did You Know?

Your health insurance plan may cover doula care, so call ahead and ask.

- Do you accept alternative payment arrangements?

Referrals

- May I please have the names of some women you have worked with recently for reference purposes? If you do not have permission to give their names and contact information, would you please ask them to contact me?

Childbirth Connection, a program of the National Partnership for Women & Families, works to improve the quality, outcomes and value of maternity care in the United States. Learn more at www.ChildbirthConnection.org and www.NationalPartnership.org.

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