



# WHY WE ENCOURAGE DOULAS FOR LABOR SUPPORT

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## WHAT IS A DOULA?

"A *birth doula* is a companion who supports a birthing person during labor and birth. Birth doulas are trained to provide continuous, one-on-one care, as well as information, physical support, and emotional support to birthing mothers and their partners." - Dr. Christine Morton

## WAIT, CAN'T MY MIDWIFE JUST DO ALL THAT?

The short answer is yes, your midwife DOES have doula support skills. However, doulas are in it for the long haul and are with you a lot earlier in labor than the midwife is able to be. For those who may experience a very long, early labor - it can be helpful to have a support person at home with you until it is time to be with the midwives. While your midwife **will** pop in with some labor support skills and connection, it would be unrealistic for her to provide the extensive level of hands on labor care that a doula does. You want your midwife to be fresh faced and safe when it comes to monitoring and helping to catch your sweet baby! In active labor, it is vital that she put on her "midwife hat" and be the guardian of normal...which means she may not be available for things like hip squeezes, rebozo work and massage!

# BENEFITS OF HAVING A DOULA & MIDWIFE ON YOUR BIRTH TEAM

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## DOULA

- 1 Doulas are available to you during early labor when it's not quite time to meet the midwives, but you could use some extra hands on & emotional support.
- 2 Doulas are not a replacement for your partner in labor, but rather act as a *supplement*.
- 3 Doulas help with position changes, facilitate rest for you and your partner, provide massage, counter pressure, hip squeezes, rebozo work to help with baby's position, keeping you fed/hydrated and so much more! Doulas do **not** provide medical care.

## MIDWIFE

- 1 Your midwife will be with you once your labor has reached the active phase, contractions are close together and becoming stronger.
- 2 Midwives are responsible for caring for your medical needs during pregnancy, birth & postpartum. She will monitor your labor, assess the baby's heart rate, assist with delivery & monitor you during the immediate recovery period. She is also responsible for handling any potential complications or emergencies.
- 3 Your midwife will also provide medical care for your baby after birth, including the newborn exam, monitoring and any other needs.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Studies show that having a doula on your team results in a:

- 39% decrease in risk of Cesarean
- 15% increase in likelihood of spontaneous vaginal birth
- 10% decrease in the use of medications for pain relief
- Shorter labors by 41 minutes on average
- Decrease in pain and anxiety

# HOW TO FIND A BIRTH DOULA



We recommend that **all families having their first out of hospital delivery** consider adding a doula to their birth team. Below, you'll find a link to an updated list of some of our favorites! We recommend meeting with several to find the right fit. It's best to start this research early in your pregnancy, before her schedule fills up!

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

**FIND OUR  
FAVORITES HERE!**

<http://www.joyful-beginnings.com/the-labor-resource-hub>

**READ MORE ABOUT  
THE PERKS OF  
HIRING A DOULA!**

<https://evidencebasedbirth.com/the-evidence-for-doulas/>

**CHECK OUT THIS  
LOCAL RESOURCE FOR  
FREE DOULA CARE!**

**San Antonio Birth Doulas**

*\*FREE services*

(210) 222-0988

Please request one of the following doulas if possible:

- **Jessica Sullivan**, Bethany Cain, Patricia Mestas

\*if one of the above are not available, please meet with anyone that is available and ask the questions below!

## QUESTIONS TO ASK?

- How many out of hospital births have you attended?
- What is your transfer rate?
- When do you arrive in labor?
- How long do you stay postpartum?
- What kind of support do you offer?