

Summary

"Although continuous support can also be offered by birth partners, midwives, nurses, or even some physicians, research has shown that with some outcomes, doulas have a stronger effect than other types of support persons. As such, doulas should be viewed by both parents and providers as a valuable, evidence-based member of the birth care team."

(Evidence Based Birth, 2019)

Resources

It is highly recommended to hire a doula, if you are looking for one these are some links that can help you:

- [Military Birth Resource Network:](http://www.militarybirthresourcenetwork.org)
www.militarybirthresourcenetwork.org
- [Dona International](http://www.dona.org/what-is-a-doula/find-a-doula/)
www.dona.org/what-is-a-doula/find-a-doula/
- [Doula Match](http://www.doulamatch.net)
www.doulamatch.net
- Local pregnancy support groups.
- Local/regional facebook groups.



DOULAS & Labor Support



For more information

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Or contact:

References

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- All other images are courtesy of Canvas.

Doulas

WHAT IS A DOULA?

"A trained professional who provides continuous physical, emotional, and informational support to their client before, during and shortly after childbirth to help them achieve the healthiest, most satisfying experience possible."

(Dona International, n.d.)

WHAT IS LABOR SUPPORT?

The therapeutic presence of another person, in which human-to-human interaction with caring behaviors is practiced. Moreover, it is the "constant presence" throughout labor, providing specific labor support techniques and strategies, encouraging laboring people and families, and facilitating communication.

(Gruber et al., 2013; Jordan, 2013)



Benefits

Continuous support by doulas:

- Increased the parent's self-efficacy regarding their ability to impact their own pregnancy outcomes.
- Lower risk of low birth weight (LBW) births.
- Significant reductions in cesarean births, instrumental vaginal births, need for oxytocin augmentation, and shortened durations of labor.
- Higher newborn Apgar scores (greater than 7) and overall higher satisfaction by parents with the birthing process.
- Reduction of labor length by about 40 minutes.
- Can lower postpartum depression in parents.

(Campbell et al., 2006; Chaudhuri et al., 2009; Gruber et al., 2013; Klaus & Klaus, 2010; Newton et al., 2009; Papagni & Buckner, 2006; Sauls, 2002)

Cons

There is no evidence nor reported contraindications for doulas or continuous labor support. Perhaps it could be important for a family to consider their preferences and their privacy. Nonetheless, doulas do respect and encourage private and intimate time among families during birth.



Doulas vs Midwives

WHAT DOULAS DO NOT DO?

Although both doulas and midwives do offer constant presence and support during birth, it is crucial for a family to understand and not to confuse the work of a doula with the one of a midwife.

A doula is NOT a healthcare provider nor is medically trained. Therefore, a doula does not do:

- Perform clinical tasks such as vaginal exams, parental vital signs or fetal heart monitoring.
- Give medical advice or diagnose conditions.
- Make decisions for the client (medical or otherwise).
- Pressure the birthing person into certain choices just because that's what they prefer.
- Take over the role of the partner.
- Catch the baby.
- Change shifts (although some doulas may call in their back-up after 12-24 hours).

(Evidence Based Birth, 2019, Dona International, 2020)

