



## What's a Doula?



***A doula is anyone who's been through labor before, and can help guide, support, and inspire a mom through it.***

Whether your doula is a loving family member, a mom friend, or a trained support person – women in labor benefit from having someone there for emotional support. Just ask yourself: how does this person make me feel on the deepest level?

So can our partner be a doula? While partners can be our lifeline, they'll be going through their own emotional journey, and might need to take care of themselves. Having another person who's there just for you can be really useful. Here are some things to know:

- ♥ The word "doula" means **servant** in ancient Greek.
- ♥ A trained doula isn't there to take over - she's trained to help your partner know how to **support** you.
- ♥ A doula is not there to do any medical interventions, or physical checks. She's just there to **hold the space** for you to be in your power, to explain what's going on, and to help you get through the hard times.
- ♥ She also makes **sandwich breaks** possible for your partner!
- ♥ A professional doula will and your partner several times before the birth, and help you figure out what you want in an ideal situation **meet with you**, and what you want in different scenarios.



It's your birth, and you'll remember it forever. Who's in the room is up to you, so you can get the support you need to have a beautiful birth experience.

## Why use a doula?

***Doulas are trained to reduce stress and fear.***

Stress and fear can inhibit labor progress, increase discomfort, and reduce your feelings of satisfaction about your birth experience. In studies, doulas are shown to substantially reduce the risk of Cesarean birth.



A lot of things happen during labor, and we're in a slightly altered state. The doula can explain what the healthcare provider has said, and give you the pro's and con's of your options. She also knows what you want in different situations and can support you in going in that direction.

A doula can suggest positions and do hands-on care to reduce discomfort, and help labor progress. Some doulas come prepared with a toolkit of aromatherapy, focal items, and oils – others just use their voice and eyes.

## How to choose a doula?

Google local doula services and let them know your budget. Some doulas have the training and the enthusiasm, just not the experience – and they can be very affordable. Invite three doulas over (not at the same time) to sit at your kitchen table with you and your partner and talk.

After, ask yourself and your partner:

- ♥ How will you feel about spending a day or two in a room with your partner and doula?
- ♥ How will you feel about her touching you?
- ♥ How well will she and your partner work together?



Like so much about this journey: trust your intuition.

Picture courtesy of Margie Levy, [www.SupportiveDoula.com](http://www.SupportiveDoula.com).

## What if my partner isn't into the idea?

It makes sense that your partner would want to share this experience with just you. But once partners realize that having a doula allows them to support the woman they love with the confidence of not being alone and solely responsible for everything at the birth, they are usually all for it. Invite three doulas over, and see how you both feel!

with love and blessings,

Jess



Jessica Jennings, MS, ERYT, RYPT

**Founder, Ma Yoga® for Pregnancy, Motherhood & Beyond**

[www.MaYogaLiving.com](http://www.MaYogaLiving.com)

[Jess@MaYogaLiving.com](mailto:Jess@MaYogaLiving.com)

