

## Doula Referral

### What is a doula?

A doula is a trained professional who provides physical, emotional, and informational support to families during pregnancy and after childbirth (DONA, n.d). Birth doulas can work on a birthing plan with you and provide education to best prepare you for labor and delivery.

Postpartum doulas provide care after birth to help you transition to parenthood. They can answer questions about postpartum recovery, newborn care, and breastfeeding. Many are available for home visits to provide knowledge and teaching of skills to support the transition into parenthood.

Doulas can help with:

- Breathing techniques to help during labor
- Providing physical support during labor and can be with you during the entire labor experience
- Education about labor, delivery, and postpartum
- Practical in-home support
- Preparation for postpartum
- Educate on warning signs to look out for before and after birth.
- Encourage the family unit to be the leader in their decision-making

### Why have a doula during pregnancy and postpartum?

- Families receive individualized pregnancy, birthing, and newborn education.
- Interesting fact: Parents who worked with doulas had decreased negative feelings about the childbirth experience when compared to others who did not (Bohren et al., 2017).
- Postpartum doulas are experts in emotional support. They listen and encourage clients to be their own advocates during the postpartum experience.

### Referral Information and Additional Resources

#### References:

- Bohren, M.A., Hofmeyr, G.J., Sakala, C., Fukuzawa, R.K., & Cuthbert, A. (2017). Continuous support for women during childbirth. *Cochrane Database System of Reviews*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD003766.pub6>
- Dona International. (n.d.). *Benefits of a Doula*. <https://www.dona.org/what-is-a-doula/benefits-of-a-doula/>

