

Post Natal Doula FAQs

1. What do postpartum doulas do?

What a postpartum doula does changes from day to day, as the needs of the family change. Postpartum doulas do whatever a mother needs to best enjoy and care for her new baby. A large part of their role is education. They share information about baby care with parents, as well as teach siblings and partners to “mother the mother.” They assist with breastfeeding education. Postpartum doulas also make sure the mother is fed, well hydrated and comfortable.

2. How long does a postpartum doula spend with a family?

Doula support can last anywhere from one or two visits to more than three months.

3. What hours can I expect a doula to work with my family?

Some doulas work fulltime, with 9 to 5 shifts. Others work three to five hour shifts during the day, or after school shifts until Dad gets home. Some doulas work evenings from around 6 pm until bedtime, 9 or 10 pm., and some work overnight. Some doulas work every day, some work one or more shifts per week.

4. What is the difference between a postpartum doula and a baby nurse?

The role of a postpartum doula is to help a woman through her postpartum period and to nurture the family. Unlike a baby nurse, a doula’s focus is not solely on the baby, but on fostering independence for the entire family. The doula is as available to the father and older children as to the mother and the baby. Treating the family as a unit that is connected and always changing enables doulas to do their job: nurture the family.

5. What is a postpartum doula’s goal?

The goal of a doula is to nurture the parents into their new roles. As they experience success and their knowledge and self-confidence grow, their needs for professional support should diminish.

6. How can I find a postpartum doula in my area?

There are number of websites that list doula’s by their locations.

7. How does a doula nurture the parents into their roles?

Self-confidence has a tremendous impact on a person’s ability to approach any task, and parenting is no different. Doulas are taught to always consider parents’ feelings and always build confidence whenever possible. Doulas accomplish this through praise, acceptance and a non-judgmental approach. In addition, the doula will teach parents strategies and skills that will improve their ability to bond with their babies. A calm baby who is growing well will help parents to feel more confident in their skills.

8. Do doulas help mothers to deal with postpartum depression?

Unlike therapists or psychiatrists, doulas do not treat postpartum depression. However, they will help by creating a safe place for the mother emotionally. The doula will provide a cushioning effect by accepting the mother within each stage that she passes through. They relieve some of the pressure on the new mother by helping her move into her new responsibilities gradually. By mothering the mother, doulas make sure that the mother feels nurtured and cared for, as well as making sure she is eating well and getting enough sleep. In addition, postpartum doulas are trained to help clients prepare themselves for parenthood, maximizing support and rest.

9. Do doulas teach a particular parenting approach?

No. doulas are educated to support a mothers’ parenting approach. Doulas are good listeners and encourage mothers to develop their own philosophies.

10. How do postpartum doulas work with a mother’s partner?

A doula respects the partner’s role and input, and teaches concrete skills that will help the partner nurture the baby and mother. The doula will share evidence-based information with the partner that shows how his or her role in the early weeks will have a dramatic positive effect on the family.

