

# Isn't a doula the same as a mid-wife?

Before midwifery became a regulated (government) profession the truth is doulas have been supporting women in labour and delivery before midwives. Fact is doulas have been helping women for hundreds and hundreds of years. Your grandmother, great-grandmother or perhaps even your mother received the support of a doula which derives from a Greek term meaning "a woman who serves".

There are a few differences between doulas and midwives: First, a doula can not prescribe nor provide medications/medical interventions, and second, time. A doula is available to her client 24 hours, 7 days a week to address concerns, answer questions and provide resources needed. A doula attends the entire labour and delivery with no rotation and will stay a few hours after the birth. There is evidence-based research which indicates that by having a doula (a non-medical female who provides continuous emotional, physical labour support) can improve the birth and postpartum outcomes for mother and baby.

When a doula supports a woman during labour and delivery, requests

for an epidural and the rate of caesarean sections decrease significantly. A doula provides advocacy on a woman's behalf or along side of her with medical staff. A doula provides alternative interventions such as massage, visualizations, aromatherapy and other coping strategies.

Doulas support partners too and will not replace their role. Having a doula may eliminate most fears and anxiety from the childbirth process by empowering couples with information so that she/they make informed decisions. Together a birthing plan is determined. A doula respects all decision's made by the woman in labour. She will continue to provide the same level of support for women who are birthing naturally, with pain medication or by caesarean birth.

*Article submitted by Inner Bloom Doula and Wellness. They offer the following services: Labour Doula, Prenatal/Postpartum Yoga Dancing for Birth/Postpartum, Childbirth Education Classes including Advanced Comfort Measures (not offered by hospital classes). Info: 905-908-0164 or innerbloom-doula@gmail.com*



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