



## Know your birth team: Doulas

**A prenatal care team often includes a medical professional like a doctor or midwife. But did you know that your care team can also include a doula?**

Doulas do not provide medical care. They're professionally trained guides who provide support, including breathing and relaxation techniques you can use while in labor. They help you and your partner feel confident and informed throughout your pregnancy and birth journey.

### Here's why doulas are so important:

- Studies show they may reduce complications, lower stress, and even increase breastfeeding rates, leading to healthy moms and babies.
- They respect your wishes and choices, helping you navigate birth options and advocating for your needs. No more feeling lost or unheard!
- They equip you with clear information and emotional support so you can feel prepared for every step.

Doulas work alongside your medical team. No matter what type of birth you have, a doula can be your positive support system. Choosing the right care team will depend on your individual needs and preferences.

**Talk to your prenatal care provider about the different options available to you and remember these key differences:**

| Features   | Prenatal care providers                  | Doulas      |
|--|--|-------------|
| ✓ Has medical training   | Yes                                      | No          |
| ✓ Makes medical decisions  | Yes (together with you and your partner) | No          |
| ✓ Delivers babies  | Yes                                      | No          |
| ✓ Provides emotional support                                       | Sometimes                                | Yes         |
| ✓ Helps with breastfeeding   | Sometimes                                | Yes         |
| ✓ Teaches relaxation and mindfulness for a better birth experience | Rarely                                   | Yes         |
| ✓ Covered by insurance   | Yes                                      | Not always* |

*\*If your insurance doesn't cover doula care and support, low-cost and free options may be available through your hospital, clinic, or in your local community.*

For more information on doulas, go to [marchofdimes.org/doulas](https://marchofdimes.org/doulas)

#### Additional resources:

- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: <https://www.acog.org>
- American College of Nurse-Midwives: <https://www.midwife.org>
- Doulas of North America (DONA): <https://dona.org>
- National Black Doulas Association (NBDA): <https://www.blackdoulas.org>