

Letter of Agreement Describing Doula (Labor Support) Services, Limits & Fees

What is a doula?

As a birth doula, I accompany people in labor to help ensure a safe and satisfying birth experience. I have completed training approved by DONA International and have worked with over 110 families as of December 2019. I draw on my professional training, knowledge and experience to provide emotional support, physical contact, and as needed, communication with the staff to make sure you have the information you need to make informed decisions as they arise in labor. I can provide reassurance and perspective to you and your partner, make suggestions for labor progress, and help with relaxation, massage, positioning and other techniques for comfort. I am independent and self-employed. As your doula, I am working for you, not your caregiver or hospital.

Before labor.

I will meet with you and your partner two or more times before labor to become acquainted, to explore and discuss your priorities and any fears or concerns, to discuss your birth preferences and to plan how we might best work together. I also want to know your own best ways of coping with pain and fatigue and how you and your partner foresee working together.

I will also inform you of times when I am unavailable for labor support. To cover those times, I will arrange one or more qualified back-up doulas whom you may also meet.

We may also decide on other meetings and will certainly want to remain in touch by telephone and/or email. In the case of unusual circumstances, we may also meet before labor begins virtually. Zoom or FaceTime are examples of platforms we might use.

When you are in labor.

I prefer that you call me when you think you are in labor, even if you do not yet need me. I can answer questions and make suggestions over the phone. We will decide if I should come right then or wait for further change. I usually need approximately one hour to get to you from the time you ask me to come. We will also decide where to meet- at your home or at the hospital. Except for extraordinary circumstances, I will remain with you throughout your labor and birth.

In the case of unusual circumstances, support during labor and birth may happen virtually, such as via a video conferencing platform. Because video conferencing is not something that is used regularly, we will work together to determine the best way to meet your needs in labor and birth. Should video conferencing be necessary in labor and birth, such as during COVID-19 or other health pandemic, you will communicate your needs during labor and birth, should you need something other than what is provided. Examples: you prefer to remain in touch via telephone periodically during labor rather than continuous support, or, you prefer to have continuous video conferencing instead of the agreed upon periodic virtual support. I will expect that you will communicate to me if your needs change from what

we had discussed earlier.

After birth.

I usually remain with you for one or two hours after birth, until you are comfortable and your family is ready for quiet time together. I can also help with initial breastfeeding, if necessary. I will refer you to a certified lactation consultant or other qualified resource if I am unable to help with specific breastfeeding issues.

In the case of virtual support, you can expect that I will continue to provide virtual support until you are comfortable and your family is ready for quiet time together.

I am available to answer questions about the birth and would prefer to visit while you are in the hospital for a shorter visit, a visit during the first week and a visit in the first six weeks. In the case of virtual support, I would prefer to arrange to communicate with you in the same schedule (first few days, first week, first six weeks) using video conferencing, phone or texting to communicate.

As a doula, I do not:

1. Perform clinical tasks, such as blood pressure, fetal heart checks, vaginal exams, and others. I am there to provide only physical comfort and emotional support.
2. Make decisions for you. I will help you get the information necessary to make an informed decision. I will also remind you if there is a departure from your birth preferences.
3. Speak to the staff on your behalf. I will discuss your concerns with you and suggest options, but you or your partner will speak directly to the clinical staff. Exceptions include reference to your birth preferences and physical needs (request for fluids, birth ball, etc.).

Failure of a doula to provide services.

I will make every effort to provide the services described here. Sometimes this is impossible (for example, with a rapid labor). If my failure to attend your birth is due to my error, there will be no charge for my services and I will refund the retaining fee. If it is due to circumstances beyond anyone's control or your failure to call me, I will keep the retaining fee but there will be no further charges. If a back-up doula is used, then it is implied this contract applies to her services, as well.

In the case that your provider recommends a scheduled cesarean, we will decide how you would like to move forward as you prepare for your cesarean birth. Additional visits may be scheduled to discuss cesarean birth or ways to encourage your baby to assume a head-down position. Options for support during a planned cesarean birth may include: 8 hours of in-hospital support after your baby has arrived (*only 1 support person is allowed to accompany you into surgery*), 8 hours of in-home postpartum support or some combination of in-hospital and in-home support. These hours are in addition to the planned shorter visit in the hospital, a visit during the first week and a 2-hour visit in the first six weeks. The doula and client may also come up with an agreed upon plan to best meet the family's needs.

In the case of virtual support, it is understood that I remain on-call for you and should you decide not to contact me for virtual support, I will keep the retaining fee and there will be no further charges. In the case that I don't provide support during the labor and birth, due to circumstances beyond anyone's control or your failure to call me, postpartum support will still be available, per what's outlined in the contract.

Fees. \$800

My fee for the services described here is, to be paid as follows:

____\$600 is due when you select me as your doula.

____\$200 is due by your 37th week.

I/We have read this letter describing the doula's services and agree that it reflects the discussion we had with her.

Date

Client _____

Client's Partner _____

Doula *Amy Beck*