

What Is a Doula?

A doula is a trained companion who supports a person and their family through birth, the postpartum weeks or the end of life. A doula does not give medical care.

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A doula is a trained companion who gives emotional, physical and informational support to a person and their family. A doula is not a clinician: they do not diagnose, prescribe or perform medical procedures.

The three kinds of doula

- **Birth doulas** support you during pregnancy and labour. They help you prepare, stay with you continuously during the birth, and often visit once afterwards.
- **Postpartum doulas** help in the first weeks after the baby arrives: newborn care, feeding support, household help and space for you to rest and recover.
- **End-of-life doulas** (also called death doulas or death midwives) support a dying person and their family with planning, presence and practical help at the end of life.

What a doula does and does not do

A doula listens, explains options in plain words, suggests comfort measures and stays present when others cannot. A doula does not replace a midwife, nurse or doctor, and does not give medical advice. On this site, every listing states what the business itself says it offers.

How to choose one

Ask about their training, the births or families they have supported, what their fee includes, and how on-call time works. A short introductory call is normal before you book. Use the doula cost estimator and the Medicaid coverage checker on this site to plan the cost side.

Frequently asked questions

Is a doula the same as a midwife?

No. A midwife is a licensed clinician who delivers babies and provides medical care. A doula is a nonmedical companion; doulas do not perform clinical tasks.

Do I need a doula if I have a partner or family support?

Not necessarily. A doula adds trained, continuous support and helps your partner help you. Many families hire one for the calm of someone who has seen many births.

What is a death doula?

An end-of-life doula, also called a death doula or death midwife, supports a dying person and their family with planning, presence and practical help. They do not provide medical or legal services.

Sources

[DONA International - What is a doula](https://www.dona.org/what-is-a-doula-2/) — <https://www.dona.org/what-is-a-doula-2/>
[International End of Life Doula Association \(INELDA\)](https://inelda.org/) — <https://inelda.org/>