

Considerations When Choosing a Doula

If you are considering having a doula as part of your labor support team, we highly recommend that you and your partner meet with potential doulas to see if you are compatible. Should you decide to employ a doula, you will want to choose someone with whom you feel comfortable and who supports your wishes for your labor and birth experience. Be cautious of anyone who has a plan or agenda of her own. You will be sharing one of the most intimate experiences of your life with your doula, and you want someone who will assist and encourage you with whatever choices you make.

Below are some questions that may help you as you make this choice.

- Certification and education: Has the doula been certified? By what organization? Is she a registered nurse? What education/training did the doula receive to become certified? Were the trainers medical professionals?
- o **Experience:** How many births has the doula attended?
- o **Services:** How does she describe her role during the labor and birth? What is her philosophy for supporting you and your partner through labor and birth?
- o **Childbirth classes:** Will the doula provide these services? Is there a charge?
- o **Pain medication:** How does she feel about the use of pain medication in labor?
- Meetings: How often will you meet with your doula prior to your delivery? Will she join you at home or once you are admitted to the hospital?
- Availability: What is her availability around your due date? Who will replace her if she is not available?
 Will you have the opportunity to meet the replacement?
- Collaboration: Is she available to meet with you, your significant other, and your physician/midwife prior to delivery to discuss a collaborative plan of care?
- o **Confidentiality:** What is in place to assure your confidentiality?
- o **References:** Does she provide references?
- o **Cost of services:** What is covered? Labor support at home? Just in the hospital? If you choose an epidural or cesarean section? Refund policy? Discontinuation of services by either party?
- o **Insurance:** Does she carry insurance?
- o **Background check:** Has she had a background check?

Please note that if it is deemed necessary, anyone, including your doula, may be asked to leave the delivery room to ensure safe and proper patient care for you and your baby.