

# Doula Support through CVMC

A great resource for everyone!



## WHAT IS A DOULA?

A doula is a professional trained in childbirth who provides emotional, physical, and educational support to a mother who is expecting, is experiencing labor, or has recently given birth. The doula's purpose is to help women have a safe, memorable, and empowering birthing experience.

Most often the term doula refers to the birth doula, or labor support companion. However, there are also antepartum doulas and postpartum doulas (if you wish to know more about these resources as well, our office support team for the doula program can inform you).

## WHAT DO THEY DO?

Most doula-client relationships begin a few months before the baby is due. During this period, they develop a relationship in which the mother feels free to ask questions, express her fears and concerns, and help the mother create a birthing plan she feels confident in pursuing.

Doulas do not provide any type of medical care. However, they are knowledgeable in many medical aspects of labor and delivery.

During delivery, doulas are in constant and close proximity to the mother. They have the ability to provide comfort with pain-relief techniques including breathing techniques, relaxation techniques, massage, and laboring positions. Doulas also encourage participation from the partner and offer reassurance.

A doula acts as an advocate for the mother, encouraging and helping her fulfill specific desires she might have for her birth. The goal of a doula is to help the mother experience a positive and safe birth, whether an un-medicated birth or cesarean.

After the birth, many labor doulas will spend time helping mothers begin the breastfeeding process and encouraging bonding between the new baby and other family members.



*"My husband (partner) is my left hand and my doula is my right."*

FROM DOULAS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

*"If I don't know my options, I don't have any."*

DIANA KORTE

*"Not just the woman, the whole family...father and siblings included."*

CRYSTAL BROWN

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Numerous studies have documented MANY benefits of having a doula present during labor. With the support of a doula, women were less likely to have pain-relief medications administered and less likely to have a cesarean birth. Women also reported having a more positive childbirth experience. There are many positive health benefits that occur in pregnancies that incorporate a doula. If you would like to know more about the many health benefits associated with having a doula please ask when you are connected with our office support team for the Doula Program.

### WHAT ABOUT YOUR PARTNER'S ROLE WHEN USING A DOULA?

The role of the doula is never to take the place of husbands or partners in labor, but rather to complement and enhance their experience. Today, more husbands play an active role in the birth process. However, preferences are different for every family.

\* You may be eligible for financial assistance for the doula support offered through CVMC. If you would like to learn more about this program, please ask to speak with our Community Health Team in the office. An application would need to be completed to see if you qualify for assistance.

THE  
**University of Vermont**  
HEALTH NETWORK  
Central Vermont Medical Center

Women's Health  
Medical Office Building A, Suite 1-4  
130 Fisher Road, Berlin, VT 05602  
**802-371-5961**