

BIRTH DOULA SERVICES & EXPECTATIONS

As a birth doula, I provide emotional and physical support to a woman and her partner and/or family during her labor and delivery. I can also facilitate communication with your care provider to ensure that you have the information you need to make informed decisions regarding your baby's birth. 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 your comfort. I am independent and self-employed, and so, I am working for YOU, not your caregiver or place of birth.

Before Birth:

I will meet with you and your partner before labor to become acquainted with you; discuss your priorities and any fears or concerns; present evidence-based information on the risks and benefits of common interventions and procedures used during childbirth; discuss your birth plans; and plan how we might best work together. I will also inform you of times when I am unavailable for labor support. We may also decide on other meetings and will remain in touch by telephone and/or e-mail communication. I will be on call for your birth and I will make every effort to be there. If you like, I can also help you write a birth plan based on your needs/wants as communicated to me. I will bring a copy of your birth plan with me to your planned birth place

During Labor:

I ask that you call me when you think you are in labor, even if you do not yet need me. This gives me time to clear my calendar for the next 24 hours. I can answer questions and make suggestions over the phone, and we can decide if I should come to you then or wait for further change. I can meet you at your home or your planned place of birth. I usually need approximately one hour to get to you from the time you ask me to come. Once you call me and let me know you'd like me to begin supporting you, I will make every effort to be there within in one (1) hour. Except for extraordinary circumstances, I will remain with you throughout your labor and birth.

After Birth:

Circumstances permitting, I will remain with you for one to two hours after the birth. I am available to answer questions about the birth or your baby, and I will schedule a postpartum meeting within a few days of the birth to visit you and the baby, review the birth, talk over breastfeeding and baby care and get feedback from you about my role.

As a doula, I do not:

1. Perform clinical tasks, such as fetal heart checks or vaginal exams. I am there to provide only physical comfort and emotional support and facilitate communication between you, medical staff, and care providers.

2. Make decisions for you. I will help you get the information you need to make an informed decision.
3. Speak to medical staff or providers on your behalf. I will discuss your concerns with you and suggest options, as well as encourage you and your partner to voice your opinions, questions and concerns to the staff.
4. Provide medical advice. I can direct you to resources that might help you answer your questions and make informed decisions on your own. If you have questions or want advice about your care or that of your baby, you should contact your care provider.

Extenuating Circumstance:

While it is always smart and helpful to have a plan, births do not always go according to plan. If you plan a vaginal delivery and a cesarean is performed after labor has already started, I will continue to provide support during the cesarean surgery (as allowed by hospital and/or doctor policies) as well as immediately after to help with your comfort and breastfeeding. I will also follow-up with you after the birth, as I do with all my clients. My full fee would apply. If you and your doctor decide that a planned cesarean is necessary (that is, a cesarean done before your due date and/or before the onset of labor), I will provide support during the cesarean (as allowed by hospital and/or doctor policies) and immediately after, as well as the additional follow up for my full fee. If you are having a birth center or home birth and need a transfer to the hospital, I will accompany you and continue to provide doula support there, if necessary. I cannot under any circumstances attend a planned home birth without a midwife or other care provider present. In the event of a precipitous birth in a location other than your planned birth place (such as home or a vehicle) when a care provider is not present, I will provide only emotional and mental support as outlined above.

Failure to Provide Services:

I will make every effort to provide the services described here. If my failure to attend your birth is due to my error, and a backup doula is not available, I will offer additional postpartum services in lieu of monetary reimbursement. If my failure to attend your birth is due to an error on your part (failing to call me, for example) I will retain the full amount paid and continue my services to completion. If I am not allowed to your birth due to hospital/provider policies, I will offer additional postpartum services in lieu of monetary reimbursement. If my failure to attend your birth is due to a rapid labor (baby is born less than one hour after you call me and ask me to come), I will offer an additional postpartum visit for support at no additional cost once you leave the hospital or birth center. This can include assistance with breastfeeding, laundry, cleaning, baby care, etc. My full fee applies. I reserve the right to call in a backup doula if your labor should last over 24 hours, or if extremely exhausted, but will make every effort to remain with you through the entire duration. Any other circumstances out of my control (weather, act of God, hospital policy, etc) that result in my absence at your birth or your voluntary termination of this contract will not be refunded, however additional postpartum support may be offered in lieu of monetary value.

Back-up Doula:

In the event that I cannot attend your birth, you will have a backup doula scheduled for our agreed upon fee. Their payment will come from the original payment to the primary doula at no extra charge to you. If the back up doula is unable to make it to your birth, and you are left unsupported, additional postpartum support may be offered in lieu of monetary value.

Additional Services:

I am happy to create a custom doula package for you that includes any and all combinations of the services I provide, including prenatal doula services, birth doula services, postpartum doula services, or any other combination of services that is mutually agreeable to both you and I. All packages must be agreed upon in writing by all parties.

Responsibility of Client:

I ask that you inform me of any pregnancy-related or other health complications or conditions you may have, as well as any other special circumstances you might have or require. I also ask that you keep me abreast of what happens at your prenatal appointments from 36 weeks forward (if your cervix is dilated, any tests or procedures you might experience, anything your care provider seems concerned about, etc). Text, email and phone are all fine for contact. I also request that you inform your care provider that you have hired a doula. If for any reason you decide not to have me at your birth after you have signed this contract, I ask that you let me know as soon as possible.

Fees:

Fees are agreed upon based on services provided. The total amount due is owed at the time indicated on the contract unless otherwise agreed upon in writing. I accept Zelle electronic deposits, cash, check (made out to "Clarissa Gonzales" or "Fruit of Her Womb, LLC), or PayPal (last choice). Payment arrangements can be discussed in person, on the phone, or via email. If alternative means of payment, sliding scale, or a payment plan are being used, they must be agreed upon in writing by you and I prior to the signing of the contract.