



Questions to Ask a Doula

The Doula's Beliefs

These questions will help to reveal if you and your doula have compatible philosophies of labour and birth, and will hopefully also give you a sense of who she is as a person. A doula with your best interests at heart should be happy to refer you to someone else if you don't feel you are well matched with her.

- What do you think is the most important part of your job?
- How do you see your role as a doula?
- How do the doctor, nurses and/or midwife usually react to your presence?
- What do you think the woman's partner's role should be during labour?
- What are the main skills or abilities you bring to the birth?

The Doula's Service

You may wish to ask these questions early in an interview to make sure the doula offers the kind of service you are looking for. A professional doula should be able to answer these questions definitively and without hesitation.

- Do you work with back-up doulas? Could I (we) meet them?
- If I have to use your back-up doula, can I be sure I will get the same quality of service?
- Tell me (us) about your experience with birth. Cesarean birth? Home birth? VBAC? Unmedicated? Epidural?
- How often will we meet before and after the birth? What topics will we cover at our meetings?
- At what point will you start assisting me in labour?

Practicalities

The way a doula handles practical matters can indicate her overall approach to client care.

- What is your fee, and what does it include? What are your standard payment arrangements? Do you have a sliding scale?
- Where did you get your training, and how many hours did it involve?
- Have you taken any continuing education since your initial training? How many births have you been to?
- Will you provide references that I may contact?
- Do you have a contract to ensure I get the service I am expecting?
- Do you have a cell phone or pager so I can contact you at any time?

Your Impressions

When you meet the doula (and it is a good idea for both you and your partner to meet her), pay particular attention to your personal perceptions of the doula. Is she kind, warm, enthusiastic? Is she knowledgeable? Is she a good listener? Is she supportive of your plans for your birth?

