

# Doula Guidelines

When you come to an Intermountain hospital to give birth, the medical team is glad to welcome you and your loved ones. Your doula is also welcome! Studies show that having a trained birth attendant to provide emotional support and labor coaching can help you have the birth experience you desire.

This handout lists guidelines for your doula when she is working to support you in a labor and delivery setting. Your doula will likely be familiar with them—they are based on positions from the DONA (Doulas of North America) organization. **Please share them with your doula and any other person who intends to support you during labor and delivery.**

These guidelines are important. Since the doula works for you and isn't an employee of the hospital, the guidelines help us all foster a safe and supportive environment. They help make sure everyone works well together to nurture you and your baby.



## ***What should a doula DO during labor and delivery?***

A doula:

- **Offers guidance and help with your comfort during labor.** For example, your doula may help with breathing and relaxation techniques, movement and positioning, and visualization exercises.
- **Fosters a positive environment and supports good communication between you and your healthcare team.** For example, your doula may help you communicate your wishes for your medical care as recorded in your birth plan. If you like, she may also help the medical team explain some of your care and options to you. Most helpfully, your doula can encourage you to ask questions and to speak for yourself. You are your own best advocate.
- **Provides physical and emotional support for you and your partner during labor and birth.**
- **A doula protects your privacy.** Just as the medical team adheres to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations, your doula should also respect patient confidentiality.

## ***What should a doula NOT DO during labor and delivery?***

A supportive and well-trained doula does not:

- **Perform clinical or medical tasks.** Your healthcare team provides these services. This means your doula cannot do these or any other clinical tasks:
  - Take blood pressure or temperature
  - Check fetal heart tones or adjust monitors
  - Do vaginal exams
  - Rupture membranes (“break your water”)
  - Do perineal massage
  - Give or adjust medicine (including homeopathic or herbal remedies)
- **Interfere with medical treatment or disrupt the positive birthing environment.**
- **Diagnose medical conditions or present your options for medical care.** Instead, she supports the communication of the medical staff.
- **Speak for you or make decisions for you.** Rather, she encourages you to ask questions about your care and treatment.
- **Object to following the policies of the hospital and the direction of your healthcare team.** As she supports you in your labor, she works at the discretion of the doctor or nurse and cooperates with their requests.

## Comfort aids

To help manage the intensity of labor, women and their doulas often bring comfort aids to the hospital—things like birthing balls, framed photos, and massage tools. You're welcome to do this, too. However, as you pack your bag in preparation for labor in the hospital, keep in mind that **due to safety rules, the following are not allowed in Intermountain hospitals:**

- Anything that needs to be plugged in such as blenders, heating pads, or crockpots
- Essential oil diffusers
- Candles or anything with an open flame
- Sacks or packs that need to be microwaved (the healthcare team is not allowed to heat them for you)

If you have questions about what's appropriate to bring to the hospital, please call the hospital and ask to speak with someone in the labor and delivery area.



## Questions for my doctor

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