

Frequently Asked Questions

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What type of services do you offer?

Birth Doula Service
Postpartum Doula Service
Private Childbirth Education Class
Private Breastfeeding Class (prior to birth)
Private Breastfeeding Consultation (after birth)
Prenatal/Labor/Postpartum Massage
Infant Massage

What kind of training and experience have you had?

I'm a Certified Doula through DONA International and a Licensed Massage Therapist registered with the TX State Department of Health. In addition, I'm a Certified Breastfeeding Educator, and Lamaze Certified Childbirth Educator. I have also had extensive training and experience in the following areas:
Doula'ing for mothers: who are having a VBAC (vaginal birth after cesarean), who have been sexually abused, who will be giving birth to multiples, who are surrogate mothers, and mothers who have anxiety disorders. (Download my full [Curriculum Vita](#) in a printer-friendly PDF.)

Do you have any clients I can contact for references?

Yes. I always give clients a list of references. You can also go to the page on this website and click on hotlinks to email former clients directly.

What is your personal childbirth philosophy?

Women are capable of giving birth! Giving birth is a natural physiological function and is not a medical emergency.

Can we meet for a face-to-face interview and is there a fee for this?

Yes, I recommend that you interview any doula whom you are considering. There is no fee for the interview.

How do you feel about natural childbirth?

I'm all for it, but I realize that that is a choice each individual woman has to make for herself. When one of my clients chooses to have a drug-free birth, she's almost always successful. I use a lot of massage, positioning, and numerous other "tricks" that make labor much easier for a woman. Lying in a hospital bed in agony is NOT what childbirth is all about! I've even had a few clients that fully

planned on getting an epidural, but never even got to the point that they felt they needed one, and they ended up having drug-free childbirth. Having really good support in labor makes all the difference in the world!

How do you feel about medicated childbirth?

I'm all for it too...in a sense. You never know what might come up, or what drugs a woman might be given during childbirth. In the U.S. pitocin is used quite frequently, which makes contractions harder, longer, and more painful. It's very difficult for a woman to tolerate this without pain medication. I understand there's a point that women can get to where they've "had enough." I'm also very aware that many women have no desire for a drug-free birth. In that case, it's my job to help them as much as possible so they can postpone drugs until they're well into labor.

Epidurals and narcotics have side-effects and can make labor slow down or even stop, so there are very valid reasons to at least wait until labor is very established and going well before getting drugs. And that's my goal for women who go into childbirth knowing they want pain medication. Then once a woman has an epidural or narcotics, it's my job to make sure she still moves a lot even if that means just rolling from side to side every 20 minutes or so (the more a woman moves during labor, the more the baby rotates and descends, which helps the baby move down).

I also keep an eye on the monitors much more closely after an epidural is given because the chance of the baby becoming distressed is greater. Then I also guide the woman through pushing because if she's completely numb, it's often harder for her to push because she can't feel her body's natural urges. I realize that I sound like I'm totally against the use of drugs, and I'm not. But I am against the inappropriate use of drugs, which means receiving them before labor is well-established.

What services do you provide as a doula?

After the initial interview, and the decision has been made to hire me as your doula, I am available by phone or email for any questions. I then meet with the parents about a month before the due date and we go over a very detailed birth and baby care plan.

When a mom goes into labor, I either meet her at her home or the hospital (some women prefer to labor at home as long as possible), and I help her through labor and birth using massage, positioning, encouragement, hot/cold packs, birthing ball, shower/bath, and a LOT of emotional support. I then stay for at least an hour or so after the baby is born to help with breastfeeding for the first time.

I visit the mom at her house within a few days of the birth to go over the birth with her (birth can be kind of like your wedding day, a lot of women hardly remember

a thing!) and also so I can help the mom with breastfeeding once moms milk has come in and the dynamics of breastfeeding have changed. I also love the opportunity to get to hold that sweet little newborn!

I educate and answer questions about newborn and postpartum care. I stay in touch by phone and email for about a month or so after the baby is born because most new parents have lots of questions. There's no real cut-off date as to when I'm no longer available. I have many clients whose babies are well over a year old and they still email or call with questions about teething or introducing solid foods or rashes or whatever. I do not give medical advice, but I do tell parents what is considered normal and I'm very up to date with American Academy of Pediatric recommendations.

If anything ever sounds even slightly out of the ordinary I recommend the parents take the baby to their pediatrician. I don't give medical advice, but I'm a wealth of information for "motherly insight."

Are you willing to meet with me at home before I go to the hospital?

Absolutely.

What do you charge for your birth doula service? Do you offer payment plans?

I charge \$1,000 for my doula service, which includes meeting with you beforehand to go over your birth plan, attending your birth and helping you to breastfeed, and then going to your home a few days after birth to help again with breastfeeding and talk a bit about postpartum concerns. \$500 is due when you hire me, and the balance of \$500 is due one month before your due date. Many of my clients also find it very helpful to take my private childbirth and breastfeeding classes as well.

How does your private childbirth class work?

I come to your home and meet with you and your partner for about 2 to 3 hours showing videos, having discussion, and you have the opportunity to ask whatever questions you want. Its very laid back and informal, but a tremendous amount of information is relayed. I am a Lamaze Certified Childbirth Educator and the class is based on the Lamaze Philosophy of Birth, and much of the same information is taught as in a 12-hour Lamaze class, but in an abbreviated fashion. There is a tremendous amount of information can be taught in a few hours when only teaching a couple rather than a large class. I charge \$250 for the private childbirth class, and the class is customized specifically for you and your needs.

How does your private breastfeeding class work?

I come to your home and meet with you and your partner. I show breastfeeding videos, educate you on breastfeeding, and we work with a doll to practice breastfeeding techniques. I also demonstrate a proper and improper latch with a balloon and lipstick, which gives parents a real enlightenment on the subtleties of a good breastfeeding latch. The class lasts about 1 1/2 to 2 hours and I charge \$150.

How much do you charge for private breastfeeding consultation?

If I was your birth doula, there is one postpartum visit included, and a lactation consultation is part of that visit. If I was not your birth doula, I charge \$250 for a consultation.

Is there a fee for you to come to my home for the classes or consultation?

If you are a doula client, I do not charge a travel fee. If you are only taking a class, there might be a travel fee charged, dependent upon where you live.

Do you give infant massages or do you teach infant massage?

Yes, I give infant massages, and I teach parents how to do it as I give the massage, or I use a doll if the baby is not born yet. An infant massage on a newborn should only last about 5-10 minutes at most, so I only offer infant massage or teach infant massage when added to other services where I come to your home. I charge \$50 for this service.

How does your postpartum doula service work?

As a postpartum doula it's my job to take care of you so you can take care of your baby. My main focus is to help with breastfeeding, educate the parents concerning newborn care, help with newborn care, and help the parents get some sleep. I also am available to run errands or pick up some groceries, make a sandwich, or throw in a load of laundry. I basically do whatever will help the parents ease into the transition of having a new baby in the house. I charge \$35/hr., with a 4 hour minimum, and am available for nights as well as days. Depending upon where you live there might be a travel fee charged.

I hope this answered a few of your most pressing questions, but please feel free to [email](#) or call (972-467-5650) with any other questions you have.

~Anna Marie