

# Doula

## Factsheet



**Hunter New England Local Health District supports your choice to privately employ a doula for emotional and physical support.**



**A doula is a non-medical birth person who can help you before, during and after childbirth.**

This guide can help you understand the role of a doula during pregnancy, labour, birth and after your baby is born while they accompany you within a HNELHD facility or supported homebirth.

### How doulas can help:

- ✓ Provide non-medical support and care to pregnant women and family.
- ✓ Encourage positive communication between the birthing mother and their healthcare team.
- ✓ Offer support, but not advice, to the mother and/or parents.
- ✓ Refer women to evidence-based resources and refer to their healthcare team if their needs are beyond the scope of the doula's role.
- ✓ Accurately represent their education and experience and not mislead other doulas, women, or health professionals
- ✓ Help create a positive birth environment and atmosphere.
- ✓ Guide the woman's breathing during labour and other relaxation techniques.
- ✓ Suggest positions and movements to help ease pain during labour.

### What doulas are unable to do:

- × Perform clinical tasks, even if qualified as a health professional.
- × Interpret medical tests, scans or observations.
- × Diagnose medical or pregnancy related conditions.
- × Give medical or pregnancy advice.
- × Take mother and/or baby observations e.g. temperature and blood pressure.
- × Adjust or touch any hospital equipment.
- × Speak for women or make decisions for them.
- × Restrict hospital treatment and or advice.
- × Restrict communication between hospital staff, the woman and/or their family.

**Please phone your midwife or birthing hospital if you think you are in labour or have any concerns.**

### Further information:

If you have any questions, please speak with your midwife or treating doctor. You can also request to speak to the Maternity Unit Manager at your birthing hospital.