



Doula Guidelines

Doulas Welcome!

The presence of a doula has been shown to increase physical and emotional comfort for laboring mothers. Inova understands that choosing a trusted doula who understands your personal and cultural needs during labor and delivery is important to your overall childbirth experience, and we welcome all certified doulas at our hospitals. All doulas will be asked to show their certification credentials upon arrival at the hospital. Those without credentials will be assigned visitor status and must comply with our visitor policies.

These guidelines are for your doula when they are working with you and supporting you in your labor and delivery setting. Your doula will likely be familiar with these as they are supported by DONA International, the leading organization for doula training and certification. Since the doula is working for you, and is not an employee of Inova, we use these guidelines to ensure that your birthing experience is supported and safe.

Role of the Doula

- Provide continuous physical and emotion support
- Offer client advice on comfort measures such as breathing, relaxation, movement and positioning
- Comfort the client with touch, hot or cold packs, beverages, warm baths and showers
- Assist the client and partner to become informed about the course of their labor and options
- Provide continuous emotional reassurance and comfort for the entire labor
- Advocate for client's wishes by encouraging client to ask questions and express concerns

Doulas DO NOT

- Perform clinical or medical tasks (such as vaginal exams, fetal heart rates, blood pressure or temperature monitoring or postpartum clinical care)
- Make decisions for their clients or project their own values and goals onto the laboring woman
- Offer alternative and complementary modalities that are outside their scope of practice
- Advocate by speaking for the client including second opinions or giving medical advice
- Object to following hospital policies and the direction of your healthcare team