

Consider hiring a doula

A doula is an experienced support person and guide for the mom AND her partner. She's a wonderful source of continuous, in-room, professional help during labor and birth, and many doulas are trained to assist both parents in recovery and transition to new parenthood and breastfeeding as well. Some partners are afraid that a doula will displace or replace them. Not to worry! Studies have shown that having a doula during labor greatly increases the satisfaction both parents report with their birth experiences. Statistically, a doula shortens labor by 40 minutes on average, reduces the use of Pitocin by 31%, reduces the use of pain medication by 9%, reduces the chance of cesarean by 28%, reduces the risk of newborns being admitted to NICU by 14%, reduces dissatisfaction with the birth experience by 34%, and increases the chance of spontaneous vaginal birth by 12%.²⁸ Having a supportive, knowledgeable attendant like a doula decreases the perception of pain by up to 50%. The role of a doula is not to replace the birth partner, but to support and enhance the experience for the mom, partner and baby.

If you're considering hiring a doula, start looking for one now. They are sometimes booked months in advance. Get referrals from your instructor, healthcare provider, friends, family and doula-certifying organizations (see "Helpful organizations and websites" in the Appendix) or check your local birth networks and student doula training programs and then interview a few on the phone. Local doula groups often put on periodic meet-and-greet sessions ("doula teas") for free. Doula collectives are another option. Let your doula know she can sit in on Blissborn classes for free!

Questions to ask a prospective doula

- Are you familiar with hypnosis? Are you familiar with Blissborn?
- Are you available around the baby's due date? Do you make arrangements for a backup doula in the event that you're not available, and how does that work?
- What are your fees, and what do they include? Do you use a contract?
- Are you certified? With what organization?

If you feel good about the doula, ask her for a meeting, and ask more questions:

- Why do you do this work? Tell us about some of your experiences.
- How do you think we would benefit from having a doula? How do you work with couples before, during and after labor?
- What kind of relationship do you have with our healthcare provider or hospital?
- What would be the relationship in our birthing place between us, you and the providers?
- How quickly can you get to our home and/or birthing place?
- Are you willing to learn about our Blissborn hypnosis techniques (the Partner Trigger, scripts and affirmations)?
- After the birth, how long will you stay? Do you provide breastfeeding support? Postpartum support?

"If a doula were a drug, it would be unethical not to use it."

~John H. Kennell, MD



Keep in mind

No matter who is there, no matter what's going on around you, remember that you always have the power to create your inner environment using hypnosis to filter distractions and focus on the work your body is doing.