

Birth and Breath Doula Services
Devon Linton Handel, Birth Doula

Letter of Agreement
Describing Doula Labor Support Services, Limits, and Fees

The Doula's Roles and Responsibilities

As a birth doula, I accompany women and their partners throughout labor to help ensure a safe and satisfying birth experience. I draw on my knowledge and experience as a doula and mother to provide emotional support, physical comfort and, as needed, communication with other caregivers to make sure that you have the information you need to make informed decisions as they arise while preparing for, and during labor. I can provide calming reassurance and perspective to you and your birth partner (if present), make suggestions for labor progress, and help with relaxation, massage, acupressure, positioning and other techniques for comfort. I am independent and self-employed. As your doula, I am working for you, not your caregiver or hospital.

Prenatal Meetings

I prefer to meet with you (and your partner or other support person, if applicable) at least once, preferably twice before labor to become acquainted, to explore and discuss your priorities, any fears or concerns you may have, and how we might best work together. Generally, the first prenatal meeting will take place at 32 weeks, and the second at 37 weeks. I like to have at least one of the meetings take place at your home in order to get to know the directions to your home, and your comfort zone (please do not clean for my benefit!). During these meetings, we discuss what you envision for this birth, including your preferences regarding labor management options, and your thoughts on the use of pain medications, if any. If you're interested in creating a birth plan, we can brainstorm together. We also discuss your own best ways of coping with pain or fatigue, and how you and your partner (if applicable) foresee working together. We'll practice different yoga postures, Spinning Babies, & Rebozo techniques, as well as try out a TENS Unit (optional) that help in preparing for, and during labor.

I will also inform you of times when I am not available for labor support (ie. out of town). To cover those times, I work with trustworthy and skilled back-up doulas that you may speak with or also meet. I will be available to you through phone, email or text from this point on between the hours of 7am and 11pm. I encourage you to contact me with any updates, questions or concerns. I will do my best to get back in touch with you as soon as possible.

Late Pregnancy

I will be available and on-call for you 24/7 beginning at 38 weeks until the birth of your baby(s). If you believe you may go into labor before 38 weeks, please let me know- of course I will be on call for you at that point as well- babies dictate when they are ready to come, not the calendar. I encourage you to check-in with me every several days to keep me posted on updates/concerns/questions & pre-labor signs you may have. During the on-call period, I will commit myself to remain within 90 miles of your chosen delivery place at all times unless previously discussed with you and covered by my back-up doula.

When You are In Labor

Please **call** me when you think you are in labor, even if you are not sure, no matter what time it is. I can answer questions and make suggestions over the phone. Together, we will decide if I should come to you at that point, or wait for further changes. Please allow approximately 1.5- 2 hours for me to get to you from the time you ask me to come. We will also decide where to meet - at your home or your chosen birth place. It is my standard practice to come to your home during the beginning of active labor if that is something you would feel comfortable with. There, I will encourage you to keep in contact with your medical professional(s) in order for you to determine when it is time to go to your chosen birth place/ call the midwife in the instance of a homebirth. This is in addition to the many comfort measures and suggestions I will offer. Except for extraordinary circumstances, I or my back-up will remain with you throughout active labor and birth. If labor lasts for longer than 36 hours, I may call in my backup for a few hours so that I can sleep & return fresh for you.

After the Birth

I usually remain with you for two hours (give or take) to continue with comfort measures while you settle in, to help to establish breastfeeding (if applicable), & ensure your questions are answered & until your family is ready for quiet time together. I would also be happy to take some photographs with your camera, if you wish.

I like to schedule a postpartum home visit within one to two weeks to see how you all are settling in, to review your birth experience, assist with breastfeeding (if applicable), to admire your baby(ies), discuss newborn care, and to get feedback from you about my role as your doula. I'm also happy to assist with some light house-keeping like folding laundry, dishes or straightening. Things to help you feel settled and at ease.

What Doulas Do Not Do

As a doula, I do not:

1. Perform clinical tasks, such as taking blood pressure, fetal heart checks, vaginal exams, and others. I am there to provide only physical comfort, emotional and informational support, and advocacy.
2. Make decisions for you. I will help you get the information necessary to make an informed decision. I will also remind you if there is a departure from your Birth Plan.
3. Speak to the staff instead of you regarding matters where decisions are made. I will discuss your options and concerns with you, and may suggest options, and I will help you identify key questions that may help you with your decisions, but you or your partner are the best person(s) to speak to the clinical staff.
4. As a doula I will not prescribe, diagnose or treat any medical problems that may arise, and will not be liable for interpreting diagnostic procedures. This is the role of your health care provider.
5. I am not a medical doctor, nurse, paramedic or other medical professional. Therefore, I cannot attend your birth in the absence of a doctor or other qualified medical professional. This does *not* pertain to the attendance of your labor at home during early active labor. During the time I am with you at home, I will encourage you to be in contact with your health care provider to help decide when it's time to go to your birth place, or call the midwife for a planned homebirth.
6. In the event of an extremely rapid labor or emergency situation, I will call (or encourage you to call) 911. In the event of an emergency delivery, I will do what measures I am capable of to try to keep you and the baby safe and comfortable until EMS or other qualified medical personnel arrive. By signing this, you agree that I, nor my back-up doulas will not be held liable for medical emergencies or complications arising from your pregnancy & birth.

Scheduled Cesarean Clause

Occasionally a woman will have something arise during her pregnancy that necessitates a scheduled cesarean birth. If this decision is made two weeks or more before your due date, you may choose to cancel my services with no further payment owed beyond the deposit.

Alternatively, you may choose to have me come with you to the hospital, accompany you during surgery or wait in the recovery room, and assist you with breastfeeding and adjustment in the first hours after your birth. In this instance, payment in full will be expected.

Fees and Refund Policy

The total fee for my services is **\$800, including a deposit of \$400** (applied toward the total fee) upon signing of this agreement, and the remainder (**\$400 due at 38 weeks**). It's possible to work out another payment plan, if that would be helpful for your budget.

If my, or my backup's attendance at your labor is **longer than 30 hours, there will be an additional \$25/ hour** beginning at hour 30 until the time of birth. This "additional payment" clock stops at the time of birth, and does not include the postpartum time frame. This payment is due at the time of the postpartum visit.

If the distance driven one way to your home from my home is **greater than 30 miles**, or the amount of time to drive is **greater than 45 minutes** there will be an additional **\$50** fee to compensate for mileage & driving time for a total fee of **\$850**.

Rental of the TENS Unit (optional), and the pads (purchased solely for your use) is a total of **\$25**. A form (I will provide) from your Health Care Provider advising its use is recommended. Please return the unit in the condition it was given at our postpartum meeting.

I will make every effort to provide the services described herein. Sometimes, however, this is impossible due to unforeseen circumstances. If full services are not rendered, my refund policy is as follows:

1. In the event that I fail to provide services as promised and outlined herein (this has never happened), I will refund the deposit paid and waive the remaining payment in full.
2. If one of my backup doulas attends your birth due to an unexpected circumstance, full payment is still required. My backup doula will be compensated for her services by me per private agreement. In this circumstance, you have the option to have me and/ or my backup doula attend your postpartum meeting(s).
3. If I and/ or my backup doula miss your birth due to circumstances beyond my control, the deposit will be retained but no further charges will be due. (for example: rapid labor progression in which I am not present for any of the labor, birth or immediate postpartum; illness in conjunction with unavailable backup; etc)

I/we have read and understand this agreement describing the Doula's services, have had the opportunity to ask questions and agree that it reflects the discussions we have had regarding these matters.

Agreed upon total Fee \$_____ To be paid in ___ installments of _____

Client

Date

Birth Partner (optional)

Date

Devon Linton Handel (Doula)

Date

Deposit received \$_____

Date _____

Final Payment received \$_____

Date _____

Total amount paid \$_____