



*Birthability*

BIRTH DOULA  
WELCOME PACKET

*Supported. Confident. Empowered Births*

# About

Hey There! I'm Gemma and I am Certified Childbirth Educator, a trained and experienced Birth and Postpartum doula on the Central Coast.

My fascination and passion about the wonder of pregnancy and birth has been lifelong (or as long as I can remember) but it was the birth of my first, which brought me to my calling to support and empower other women and their partners on this incredible journey.

No matter what birth you have, whether you choose to have a natural, low intervention hospital birth, an induction, a planned caesarean birth or a homebirth. I am here to support & guide you on your journey. Pregnancy, birth and the early postpartum is a very special time in your life and I believe you deserve to have the most positive and empowering experience you could hope for.

## What do I do as your doula

As your birth doula, I provide pre-birth education and information, teach comfort measures and help you discover your birthing options.

During the birth I will help create an intimate and caring environment, provide hands on support and comfort measures, help with position changes, guidance, support and back massage when needed. I will also help support your partner guide them on what to do next and how to best support you.

I support women through all phases of childbirth. Each family has unique needs and experiences, I recognise and understand the profound nature of pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period and it's ability to transform both the individual and the entire family. I know how important support, understanding and being nurtured in birth and postpartum is.

## WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE ON DOULAS?

There have been 26 randomised trials that tested the effects of continuous labour support on more than 15,000 people giving birth.

Overall, people who receive continuous support are more likely to have a normal vaginal birth and less likely to have pain medication, negative feelings about childbirth, and caesareans.

In addition, their labours are shorter and their babies are less likely to have complications at birth or be admitted to a NICU. In these studies, the best results occurred when the continuous support was provided by a trained doula.

---

## WHAT DON'T DOULAS DO

- They do not perform clinical tasks such as vaginal exams or fetal heart monitoring
- They do not give medical advice or diagnose conditions
- They do not make decisions for the client (medical or otherwise)
- They do not pressure the birthing person into certain choices just because that's what they prefer.
- They do not take over the role of the partner
- They do not catch the baby
- They do not change shifts.

# What Is a Doula?

A doula is a companion who supports a birthing person during labour and birth. Birth doulas are trained to provide continuous, one-on-one care, as well as information, physical support, and emotional support to birthing persons and their partners.

## WHAT DOES A DOULA DO?

Doulas nurture and support the birthing person throughout labour and birth. Their essential role is to provide continuous labour support to the mother, no matter what decisions the mother makes or how she gives birth. The doula's role and agenda are tied solely to the birthing person's agenda. This is also known as **primacy of interest**. In other words, a doula's primary responsibility is to the birthing person.

A doula provides emotional, educational and physical support. One of the doula's primary goals is to care for the mother's emotional health and enhance her ability to have positive birth memories.

A doula provides information that helps the woman make informed decisions in conjunction with her healthcare providers.

A doula provides Informational support to help keep the birthing person and their partner informed about what's going on with the course of labour, as well as provide them with access to evidence-based information about birth options.

Aspects of informational support include:

- Guiding the birthing person and their partner through labour
- Suggesting techniques in labour, such as breathing, relaxation techniques, movement, and positioning
- Helping them find evidence-based information about different options in pregnancy and childbirth.
- Helping explain medical procedures before or as they occur.
- Helping the partner understand what's going on with their loved one's labour.

Doulas do not contradict health care providers. The woman and her family have chosen a provider they presumably trust.

A doula offers guidance and community resource referrals to families regarding maternal self care, lactation, and other issues pertinent to healthy parenting through the first six weeks postpartum.

Doulas can provide a bridge in the maternity care gap.

Continuous labour support has been shown to have positive pregnancy outcome benefits, including improved satisfaction with the birth and a rise in self-esteem of the mother. This could positively impact the mother-baby relationship in the postpartum period as well as breastfeeding initiation and continuance.

# EVIDENCE ON: DOULAS

QUESTION: WHAT IS A DOULA?

**Answer:** A birth doula is a companion who provides people with continuous support during labour and birth.

QUESTION: WHAT DOES DOULA SUPPORT LOOK LIKE?

**Answer:** *Physical support* from a doula includes the use of massage, pressure, and soothing touch. Doulas create a calm environment, assist with water therapy, and help keep you nourished with food, and drinks.

*Emotional support* from doulas helps people feel a sense of pride and empowerment after the birth. Examples of emotional support include encouragement and praise, helping you see your situation more positively, keeping you company, showing that they care for you, and helping you debrief after the birth.

Doulas can also support you with information during pregnancy and birth. For example, they can guide you and your partner through labour and suggest techniques like breathing, relaxation, movement, and changing positions. Doulas help you find evidence-based information about your options, and they can help explain medical procedures.

As far as *advocacy* goes, most doulas will not speak on your behalf. However, doulas should support you in your right to make decisions about your body and your baby. They will also use advocacy techniques such as encouraging you to ask questions and speak up for what you want.

Doulas can also **enhance** communication between parents and providers. When the woman and her family speak directly with her healthcare providers, it reduces risk of miscommunication and increases shared decision making. Doulas do not contradict health care providers.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE ON DOULAS?

**Answer:** There have been 26 randomised trials that tested the effects of continuous labour support on more than 15,000 people giving birth. Overall, people who receive continuous support are more likely to have a normal vaginal birth and less likely to have pain medication, negative feelings about childbirth, and Caesareans. In addition, their labours are shorter and their babies are less likely to have complications at birth or be admitted to a NICU.

In these studies, the best results occurred when the continuous support was provided by a trained doula—someone who was not a staff member at the hospital and not part of the birthing person's social network.

QUESTION: HOW CAN DOULAS WORK WITH PARTNERS?

**Answer:** Ideally, doulas and the birth partner (i.e. spouse, partner, family member) work together to improve the mother's birth. Studies have shown that the most positive birth experiences for fathers/partners are ones where they have continuous support from a doula or midwife. In one important randomised trial, adding a doula to a supportive partner reduced Caesarean rates from 25% down to 13%. These differences were even more apparent with a labour induction. When labour was induced, the Caesarean rate was 59% with a partner alone, and 13% when partners worked together with doulas.

QUESTION: WHAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE?

**Answer:** Of all the ways birth outcomes could be improved, continuous labour support seems like one of the most important and basic needs for birthing people. Research has shown that labour support from doulas is both risk-free and highly effective.



DOULAS SHOULD BE VIEWED AS A VALUABLE, EVIDENCE-BASED MEMBER OF THE BIRTH CARE TEAM.”

1. Bohren, M.A., Hofmeyr, G., Sakala, C., et al. (2017). "Continuous support for women during childbirth." Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2017, Issue 7. Art. No.: CD003766.
2. Johansson, M., Fenwick, J., & Premberg, A. (2015). "A meta-synthesis of fathers' experiences of their partner's labour and the birth of their baby." Midwifery 31(1): 9-18.
3. Jordan, C. (2013). "Therapeutic presence and continuous labor support." In Best Practices in Midwifery, Ed. by Anderson, B. A. & Stone, Sjourna. E.
4. McGrath, S. K. and Kennell, J. H. (2008). "A randomized controlled trial of continuous labor support for middle-class couples: effect on Cesarean delivery rates". Birth 2008; 25:3.
5. Morton, C. H. and Clift, E. G. (2014). Birth Ambassadors. Texas: Praeclarus Press

# Doula Packages

Birthability offers Multiple support packages, each pack offers different inclusions to suit your needs.



## BIRTHABILITY SIGNATURE

Prenatal Preparation - (2 in-home prenatal sessions)  
Labour Support - ( Hospital/Centre/Home)  
Postpartum Care - (1 in-home follow up)

## SUPPORT ONLY

Birth preference preparation (30 min)  
Labour Support ( Hospital /Centre/Home)

## BIRTHABILITY POSTPARTUM

12 hours in home postpartum support  
Fresh meals from Meals4Mumma's

# Birthability Pregnancy & Birth Support

Investment \$1850

Suited for those seeking pregnancy, birth and initial postnatal care. This package is tailored to your individual circumstances.

- Initial Introductory Meet, Greet & Connect session
- Email and phone support - Discussion after care provider appointments, pregnancy discussion or other concerns.
- On-call from 38 weeks.
- 2 x 2 hour meetings in the prenatal period, Discuss your desires for pregnancy, birth and parenting; work through any fears; talk about model of care/care provider and communication with them & your values;
- 1 x Check in session ( 1hr) close to your due date.
- Help you and your partner learn coping techniques to have you feeling equipped & prepared
- Help with: creating a list of birth visions; guidance about what to pack in your hospital bag; setting up your birth space at home and at hospital; and a postpartum plan to ease you into motherhood.
- Extensive emotional and physical support during your labour, birth and after-birth period for you and your partner from the moment you say you need me up to 2 hours post birth.
- Access to my extensive book library
- Access and use of my doula essentials in labour - Massage tools, Essential oils,. Optimal maternal positioning, candles and affirmations plus more.
- 1 x 2 hour postnatal sessions in the immediate postpartum period to debrief your birth experience, provide breastfeeding or feeding, sleeping/ settling support. Provide extra helping hands to look after baby or do housework whilst you rest or take a shower.
- 1hr Birth Debrief 2- 3 weeks after birth
- Up to **6 weeks postpartum** phone/text support

*I can also capture moments of your baby's birth upon request, please note though supporting you is my first priority and I will do my best to capture as many images as possible.*

*You can also add on Nurtured Mumma Postpartum Package for a discounted price.*

# Birthability Support Me

Investment \$1200

This package is best suited for an experienced and educated 'birther' who doesn't need a lot of support during pregnancy but would like the support of a doula during birth

This package is **birth support only**.

**Its recommended for those who have taken a birth class, have educated themselves or birthed before and done additional research.**

**It does NOT include** prenatal or postnatal support.

I recommend you have a birth preferences list (birth plan) and that you have shared this with your care provider, and have made solid plans for the postpartum period. This package is not recommend for first time birthers unless you feel fully prepared through independent birth education.

- Initial introductory meet & connect meeting
- Email and phone support from the time of booking until 1 week after birth.
- On call from 38 weeks
- 1 x 40 min **birth preference session**. This session is so we can discuss your plans for birth, to ensure the best support from me during birth. ( session can be done in person or online)
- Extensive emotional and physical support during your labour, birth and the first hours postnatally for you and your partner.
- Access and use of my doula essentials in labour - Massage tools, Essential oils,. Optimal maternal positioning, candles and affirmations plus more.

Add on an extra prenatal - \$85

Add in a Online Hypnobirthing Australia course included 90 minute Zoom call for \$349

Feel supported

# Nurtured Mumma Postpartum

Investment \$1450

A nurturing package that supports you into your early postpartum, ensuring a complete experience of feeling supported and cared for. It includes bespoke postpartum care and Ayurvedic nutrition by *Meals 4 Mummas* which is designed for optimum postpartum recovery and nutrition.

The PERFECT extension of my birth support packages or if you just need a little bit of dedicated help once you are at home. Also ideal for those who have had a caesarean birth and need that little bit more support to ensure you can rest and recover as needed or even for late postpartum support and care.

- 12 hours of care - used either as 4 x 3 hour sessions or 6 x 2 hour sessions (Used within the first 6 weeks)
- Emotional support, guidance and coaching through the emotional transition of postpartum
- Support which is tailored to your individual needs
- Ayurvedic meal package from Meals4Mummas.
- Assistance with light housework duties such as meal preparation, laundry & general tidying
- Ensure that you as the mother get as much rest and time with your baby as possible
- Older sibling care (if needed)
- Appointment attendance - extra set hands, while you have a check up, massage or self care.
- Support/advice on settling, baby care, normal newborn behaviour, sleep and breastfeeding
- Be available for birth debrief/emotional support with adjusting to your new baby
- Telephone/Email/SMS support during my time as your postnatal doula

## **Need more postpartum support hours?**

Consider the "Transition" Postpartum Package  
\$2220

- 3hrs of postnatal support during the day spread across 9 visits (24 hrs total)
- Included is everything from my 'Nurtured Package' and support is tailored to your individual needs.

Be nurtured, for a positive postpartum



# Birthability, Home Sweet Home

Investment \$820

This package is suited for a planned homebirth and would like the additional support of a doula along side.

This package is **for HOMEBIRTH SUPPORT ONLY.**

**I recommend taking an independent birth class to be fully prepared for your birth. This package provides limited prenatal support and does not include postpartum support.**

Package Includes:

- Initial introductory meet & connect meeting
- On call 24/7 support from 38 weeks
- Unlimited text support (within reason)
- 1 Prenatal meeting. Discuss your plans for birth, to ensure the best support from me during birth.
- Birth preference worksheet and hospital transfer worksheet. Templates provided to you, for you to then provide to your homebirth midwife
- 1 x 45 min virtual check in session. This session is a short virtual check done at 37 weeks.
- In person birth support.
- Sibling support and care
- 1 x Postpartum meal

**Add in a Online Hypnobirthing Australia course included 90 minute Zoom call for \$349**

**A prenatal or postnatal visit can be arranged for an additional fee.**

Your home, your space

# The Process

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE MEETING



**1. Consultation/Meet & Connect:** we get to know each other over a quick chat and see if we make a good team. This is your time to ask any questions about doula support and tell me more about you.

**2. Booking:** I only take 2 birth clients per month to give each client individualised attention. To reserve your spot, a **\$200 deposit** is due at the time of contract signing. All of this can be done electronically. However after our meeting I hold your spot for **7 days** (giving you time to ask any additional questions, and chat with others in your support team) after this period the spot will become available for others to book.

**3. Welcome:** You are now a member of Birthability family! You have access to online resources, a virtual library, and doula support. Now is the time to complete your Birth Visions (in this pack) to get an idea of what your birth visions look like, and how I can support you through your birth journey.

**4. Prenatal Meeting #1:** Within the comfort of your own home, we will discuss your birth preferences and answer any questions. To ease your comfort in labour, we will go over breathing and position options. No matter what happens in labour, these tools will come in handy.

**5. Prenatal Meeting #2:** At around 36/37 weeks, we will go through your Postpartum Planner Worksheet and discuss all things recovery & newborn care. We will also go into the doula toolkit bag and go over all the pain-relieving tools for your labour. This is also when the remainder of your fee is due.

**6. Birth:** From the time you call, you have unlimited access to doula support until you're settled in after birth (around 2 hours post-post). Most clients call in active labour when they're ready to go to the hospital/birth centre, but the decision is up to you as I can also support you at home prior.

**7. Postpartum Visit:** Within the first two weeks, I will come to your home to check in on your well being. Ask any questions about infant feeding, sleep, or just take the time to debrief your birth and discuss this new world of motherhood.....and a shower and a tea if you need.

Partners



## DOULAS AND PARTNERS

A doula can never replace an attentive, supportive partner, but provides assistance in addition to the partner's loving support. As your doula I am there for the BOTH of you.

Birth is such an intimate event and the loving bond you share should always be front and centre. My presence is there to enhance your experience. I help support the both of you so that you can be an even better team.

I can provide help to your partner by ensuring their needs are met (food, drinks, rest breaks etc) so that in turn they can give you their best.

Sometimes even the most prepared partner can forget things they learnt in the books or birth class and I can gently suggest different comfort techniques so that they can help you. I can provide focus if things become difficult or overwhelming.

In our prenatal appointments I get to know what both of your visions for birth are, some partners want to be an active support person while others prefer to be present only. We can develop a plan that ensures both of you are comfortable with my level of support. Your partner is an expert on you and I am an expert on pregnancy and birth – the combination of us both means you have a perfect team to support your birth!

# fag's

## IS A DOULA LIKE A MIDWIFE?

No, a Doula is NOT "Just like a Midwife"! A Doula does not and is not qualified to perform any medical procedures including, cervical checks, blood pressure checks, fetal heart rate monitoring, delivering/catching the baby etc. A doula is NOT and does NOT replace a Health Care Provider such as a Midwife or OB.

## WHAT IF I WANT AN EPIDURAL?

Whether you go into your birth planning to have an epidural or choose to have one at some point in your labour, I will continue to offer physical, emotional and informational support.

## WHAT IF I WANT A HOMEBIRTH?

A doula supports a variety of births. Having a doula support you at homebirth is a wonderful way to get full circle of support.

## WHO USES A DOULA?

In short, ANY new or soon to be parent. Whether through birth, adoption, or surrogacy, you deserve someone that's 100% on your team, looking out for you & your wellness. Inclusivity is key to how I operate; I'll come into your birth or parenting space totally judgement-free and fully supportive.

## WHAT IF I SCHEDULE A CAESAREAN?

As your doula, I will accompany you to the hospital and provide support while you are being prepared for the birth and then when you are in recovery.

If permitted, I will accompany you to the operating room along with your partner. Most of all I will remind you and everyone else that this isn't a medical event, it is the birth of your precious baby!

# The 3 Pillars of Doula Support

## INFORMATIONAL

*Avoid Google - Ask Your Doula!*

A Doula offers INFORMATIONAL support by keeping you and your partner informed through each milestone of your pregnancy and postpartum journey. They can also help you find evidence based information about different options in pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum. A Doula is an unbiased resource. NEVER a source! As a birth professional, I am constantly seeking the newest research on all available options. Doula support brings to you, without judgment, the answers you and your family need.

## EMOTIONAL

*Your Emotions and Fears Are Valid!*

A Doula is a continuous comforting presence offering reassurance and encouragement, showing a caring and empathetic attitude and helping you and your partner work through fears and self doubt about pregnancy and birth. Debriefing after birth is another way a Doula can provide EMOTIONAL support.

## PHYSICAL

*Facilitating The Birth of Your Dreams!*

Doulas provide PHYSICAL support by anticipating and tending to your physical needs during birth.

- Massage/counter pressure
- Position changes and suggestions for optimal labour progression
- Create a calming environment
- Water therapy (bath, shower)
- Hydrating and feeding birther
- Hands on infant feeding support

# MY BIRTH VISIONS



BIRTHABILITY

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

NAMES OF SUPPORT PEOPLE: \_\_\_\_\_

INTENDED PLACE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

DUE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

WE ARE AIMING FOR:

CARE PROVIDER: \_\_\_\_\_

VAGINAL  NATURAL  CAESAREAN  WATER  NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

## Labour

### Positions & Comfort:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standing               | <input type="checkbox"/> Water - Bath/ Shower          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sitting                | <input type="checkbox"/> Heat + Cold                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Squatting              | <input type="checkbox"/> Massage + Counter pressure    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kneeling               | <input type="checkbox"/> Acupressure                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moving                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Breath awareness + meditation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth Stool            | <input type="checkbox"/> Birth ball/ CUB               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leaning                | <input type="checkbox"/> Vocalisation                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active Birth Positions | <input type="checkbox"/> Aromatherapy                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lying / Use of bed     | <input type="checkbox"/> Affirmations                  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/>                               |

### Procedures

- I DO NOT want an episiotomy
- Im OK to have an episiotomy
- We DO NOT want forceps used
- We want to be fully informed of ALL procedures

### Atmosphere

- Dim Lights
- Quietness
- Music
- Electric Candles/ Battery Lights
- Affirmation Bunting
- Diffuser (aroma)

## Pain Relief

- |  |                                    |  |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please DO NOT offer pain medication unless I ask            | <input type="checkbox"/> Gas / Air | <input type="checkbox"/> Opiates (pethidine, morphine injection) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please OFFER me pain medication when I appear to be in pain | <input type="checkbox"/> Epidural  | <input type="checkbox"/> Saline Injections (back labour)         |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tens      | <input type="checkbox"/> Warm bath / Shower                      |

## Induction / Augmentation of Labour

- If baby and me are well, I'm happy to wait for labour to start on its own.
- If baby and me are well, I intend to use non-medical methods to encourage labour to start.
- Stripping Membranes (stretch and sweep) at end of pregnancy
- Cervical Ripening ("the gel", Foley Catheter)
- Breaking Waters to start labour (AROM)
- Breaking Waters to speed up ("augment") labour
- Syntocinon/Pitocin ("the drip") to start labour
- Syntocinon/Pitocin ("the drip") to augment labour

### Vaginal / cervix examinations

- I would prefer NO examinations
- I would prefer minimal examinations
- I am happy for examinations as deemed necessary

# Third Stage

## Birthing The Placenta & Options

- Syntocinon Injection
- Physiological (natural) third stage
- Combination (eg. wait for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes/hours and then syntocinon if no placenta)
- View placenta
- Take placenta home
- Non-severance of cord (Lotus birth)

## Umbilical Cord Options

- Delay cord clamping until cord stops pulsating
- Delay cord clamping for at least \_\_\_\_\_ minute
- Partner to cut cord
- Private Cord Blood Banking

# The Golden Hour - First Hour After Birth

- Immediate, uninterrupted skin-to-skin for at least one hour
- Skin-to-skin with dad
- Vernix left on baby and no excessive wiping down

## Injections & Inspections

- Injections, weighing and measuring after first hour minimum
- Injections to be given while baby skin-to-skin with parent
- Hepatitis B  Vitamin K - Injection / Oral

## Breastfeeding & Formula

- I WILL be formula feeding
- I WILL be Breast Feeding
- Baby LEFT to self-attach (no time restrictions)
- Help & assistance checking baby's attachment during first feed

# Caesarean Birth & Unexpected Issues

## Caesarean Birth

In the event that a caesarean section is deemed necessary, I would like the following:

- Birth partner present  Doula present - (in recovery if partner has to stay with baby)
- I do not want to be separated from my baby & partner
- Photos / video - Photographer present if hired
- I would like the procedure described to me as it is happening
- Screen lowered at birth so i can see my baby being born
- I would like quiet music playing
- We want to do delayed cord clamping
- I want my baby placed on my chest immediately after birth (skin-to-skin)
- I want my baby with me in recovery

If my baby needs to go into a special care nursery due to medical reasons:

- I would like to breastfeed / express breast milk for my baby
- I would like assistance to nurse my baby skin-to-skin
- I would like my birth-partner to remain with the baby at all times
- Other:



## BIRTHABILITY

### *When to contact your Doula*

#### VIA TEXT

- After you have a prenatal with your care provider
- When you are unsure about how you are feeling
- When you are feel you may have contractions
- Any emotional support that you require or need to discuss
- To ask questions that do not require medical attention
- When you need more information on anything

### *When to call your Doula*

- When you need some support at home /hospital
- When you are unsure about how you are feeling
- When you lose your mucus plug or have any dilation
- Your waters have broken (contractions may not begin right away)
- When you are feeling that contractions are consistent and moving closer together.
- Any emotional support that you require
- To ask questions that do not require medical attention





BIRTHABILITY

*Contact Gemma*

0416-481-833

[education@birthability.com.au](mailto:education@birthability.com.au)

[WWW.BIRTHABILITY.COM.AU](http://WWW.BIRTHABILITY.COM.AU)