

## Birth and Postpartum FAP

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At Progyny, we know that parents should have the resources they need throughout their path to parenthood, including prenatal support, labor support, and postpartum.

Use this as a resource to learn more about birth and postpartum doula support to help you through the next chapter as you build your family.

### What is a Doula?

A *birth doula* supports birthing people and their families by providing emotional, physical, and educational support before, during, and immediately after childbirth. Most doulas are certified from a doula organization and are well-versed in supporting the birth process. Over the years doulas have been increasing in popularity as a way for expectant parents to supplement their birth team.

A *postpartum doula* nurtures the new parents once their new baby arrives by offering them practical assistance as well as emotional support. This enables the birthing person to recover faster and feel more confident in meeting the challenges a new baby brings.

**“We planned to have the postpartum doula to help with the newborn while we paid close attention to our toddler. Our doula did much more than that. She helped me find new ways to bond with our infant, gave everyone time to sleep, provided lactation support, and she bonded with our older son. But one of the most unexpected benefits was having someone to talk to that was intimately part of our lives the first few days after labor.”**

- Progyny Member

Studies have shown that families who have the continuous support of a doula have fewer medical interventions, shorter labors, lower cesarean rates, and overall, a more enjoyable birth experience.<sup>1</sup>

### What is the doula’s role in the birthing process?

A birth doula’s goal is for you to have the healthiest and most positive birth experience possible. Doulas provide



1 Kenneth J. Gruber, PhD,\* Susan H. Cupito, MA,\* and Christina F. Dobson, MEd\* “Impact of Doulas on Healthy Birth Outcomes” NBCI, The Journal of Perinatal Education, 2013 Winter, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3647727>

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the continuous emotional and physical support that labor demands so that care providers like obstetricians, midwives, and nurses can focus on the clinical demands. A doula can help encourage labor needs and be there for the partner by sharing the responsibilities, clarifying what is happening when they may feel uncertain, and being an extra set of hands.

Doulas will help you engage with the care provider in an informed and empowered way as shared decision makers in the unfolding of a birth. They will advocate for you, explain procedures, and ask nurses to explain protocols so everyone is on the same page.

**“Our doula was an instant best friend with a trove of knowledge to set us up for success. We had our first postpartum doula for a week after birth then we moved to an overnight doula. Both have been wonderful and bonded with each of our sons.”**

- Progyny Member

Typically, Doulas will schedule 2-3 prenatal visits with a client at their home (or virtually) around 32-36 weeks. Your doula should be available for you when you feel you need extra support when labor begins. Doulas can meet you at home to labor with you or can meet you at the hospital depending on your birth preferences. A doula should stay with you throughout your labor and delivery and be with you 2 hours postpartum to ensure all is well. Most doulas will include a 2–4-hour postpartum visit at your home within the first two weeks.

### Choosing A Doula:

When choosing a doula, it is important that you feel some sort of connection or positive energy with the doula. They will be with you during a sensitive, vulnerable, new, and exciting time in your life. When interviewing a potential doula ask them about their experience, if they certified with a specific organization, and what their rates are for a birth package. Typically, a birth doula will cost anywhere between \$500-\$2,000, depending on where they are based and their services.

Consider these questions when interviewing a potential doula:

- What kind of training do you have? Do you have any specialty certifications?
- Why did you become a doula? What’s your favorite part of the job and why?
- How many birth clients do you take on in a month?
- At what point do you show up?
- Do you work with a back-up?
- Have you attended a birth at the hospital/birthing center we are birthing at?
- What is your rate and what does the package include?
- Do you offer postpartum support in your birth package or is that a separate service?
- How do you typically work with partners?
- What is your go to pain coping technique for people experiencing severe labor pressure?

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## Doula Organizations & Collectives

DONA

Doula Trainings International

Boober

Doulamatch.net

Carriage House Birth (NY/LA)

Manhattan Birth (NY)

Happy Family After

Cle Baby

*Please note Progyny is not affiliated with these resources.*

## How to Apply for the Doula Financial Assistance Program:

Your employer offers access to a doula financial assistance program for which you can claim reimbursement for eligible expenses up to the established reimbursement limit. You can always speak to your Progyny Patient Care Advocate (PCA) if you have any questions.

1. Contact your PCA at 888.597.5065 and request assistance with the Doula Support Reimbursement application.
2. Your PCA will review the reimbursement policy with you, noting eligible expenses may be submitted for reimbursement only upon completion of working with your doula (2-weeks post-partum), up to the reimbursement limit.
3. Once your time with your doula is complete or you have reached your reimbursement limit, submit your expense(s) using the Progyny Attestation Form which you will receive from your PCA.
4. Progyny will review expenses and submit a report to your employer, including total reimbursable amounts, reimbursement categories, and your Employee ID (or a similar identifier).
5. Your employer then issues reimbursement to you within the next 2 to 3 payroll periods.

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Progyny's eligible reimbursements may include the following expenses, provided such expenses are incurred after an eligible employee's date of hire and are submitted within twelve months of incurring such expenses:

- Doula agency/collective and placement fees
- Cost of (certified) doula for services
- Travel expenses for doula to and from home or place of birth
- Meals for doula at place of birth
- Post-partum doula services
- A visit from a lactation or feeding counselor

Please note the following expenses are not eligible for reimbursement:

- Expenses submitted for doulas that cannot show proof of certification from a doula training program
- Any expenses that violate state or federal law
- Costs for personal items
- Costs paid using funds received from any federal, state, or local program
- Expenses allowed as a credit or deduction under any other federal income tax rule
- Expenses already paid for or reimbursed by another employer, benefit, program, or party
- Expenses not paid in US dollars
- Voluntary donations or contributions

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This benefit may be considered taxable. Please contact your PCA to learn more about tax treatment. You should also contact a trusted tax advisor for more information regarding the tax treatment of reimbursements under this fertility program.

