

The Home Visit

Ways Postpartum Maternal Caregivers or Doulas can Assist

The role of a postnatal maternal caregiver is to provide physical and practical help to the new mother

A doula's main focus is the mother's wellbeing

Nurturing and competent female caregiving has been shown to offset parent-infant attachment problems, postpartum depression, family tension, and recovery time, and to enhance the joy and happiness of being a new mother.

Assess the household and family situation

Find ways to fit appropriately into the family's household, and help make sure household systems are running smoothly so the mother can truly rest, and regain her strength, and learn about her baby.

Provide mothering tips and demonstrations when requested

Help the mother develop comfort in handling, feeding, and caring for her newborn, and make it possible for her to just have time to gaze at her baby, and feel assured that someone is there to assist, to demonstrate, or to take over for awhile, as needed.

Check on the daily needs and wants of the mother

Provide practical help when needed

This may include a range of tasks: cooking nutritious meals, taking care of the baby or other children, running errands, food shopping, light housekeeping, accompanying mother to medical appointments, helping to interview baby-sitters and so on.

Respond to problems

The doula should be trained to recognize worrisome signs, in the mother or baby, that may indicate a need for professional medical or psychological attention, such as:

Baby: No wet diapers for a long period. Constant colic.
Doesn't react to loud noises. Doesn't engage in direct eye contact.

Mother: Swollen feet. Excessive pallor, thirst, urination, etc.
Unrelenting emotional distress or fatigue.
Depression or anxiety remains unrelieved by talking or resting.