

## Sacred Awakenings



### *Benefits of having a trained Doula*

Clinical trials show that the attendance of a trained doula results in:

- 50% reduction in rate of cesareans
- 25% shorter labor
- 60% reduction in epidural requests
- 40% reduction in oxytocin use
- 30% reduction in analgesia use
- 40% reduction in forceps delivery \*

\* Klaus, M.; Kennel, J.; Klaus, P. *Mothering the Mother: How a doula can help you have a shorter, easier and healthier birth*. MA: Addison-Wesley, 1993

### *Benefits of Continuous Support by a Labor Doula as Demonstrated in Clinical Studies*

#### *Reduces:*

- Likelihood of undergoing cesarean section
- Use of epidural anesthesia or other analgesic
- Use of oxytocin (Pitocin)
- Duration of labor
- Use of forceps
- Use of vacuum extraction
- Health complications and hospitalization of newborn
- Maternal fever and infection
- Maternal bleeding after birth
- Postpartum depression
- Anxiety levels

#### *Increases:*

- Successful breastfeeding
- Spontaneous vaginal birth

#### *Provides emotional advantages*

##### *to mother:*

- Mother experiences a more positive birth experience
- Mother feels more in control
- Mother feels more secure
- Mother has higher regard for newborn and increased sensitivity toward newborn\*

\* Meyer, B.; Arnold, J., Pascali-Bonaro, D. (2001). "Social Support by Doulas During Labor and the Early Postpartum Period". *Hospital Physician*. Sept. 57-65.

## ***More Research on Doulas!***

Another review of fifteen clinical trials involving 12,791 women published in the Cochrane Review indicates that:

- Women who had continuous intrapartum support were less likely to have intrapartum analgesia, operative birth, or to report dissatisfaction with their childbirth experiences.

Subgroup analyses:

- In general, continuous intrapartum support was associated with greater benefits when the provider was not a member of the hospital staff, when it began early in labor, and in settings in which epidural analgesia was not routinely available.

Authors' conclusions:

- All women should have support throughout labor and birth. \*

\* Hodnett ED, Gates S, Hofmeyr G J, Sakala C, (2003) "Continuous support for women during childbirth (Review)." *The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*. Issue 3. Art. No.: CD003766.

## ***Postpartum Benefits***

Based on 6 clinical trials that evaluated postpartum outcomes compiled by Penny Simkin, it was shown that women who had doulas at their birth rated more positively in the following areas 4 to 8 weeks postpartum than did women who had been without doulas.

- Better breastfeeding
- Better maternal infant interaction
- Less postpartum depression and anxiety
- Higher self-esteem
- Better maternal assessments of their baby when compared to the "standard baby".
- More satisfaction with the birth experience\*

\* Simkin, P. (2004) "Benefits of a Continuous Doula" Doula training materials

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