

A Doula's Role

The term "Doula" was first used in anthropology to describe the role of the woman who attended births. It was noticed in cultures that some women gave birth by themselves and some would be attended by one or more women and those that had attendants had better outcomes. The name the scientists gave to these attendants is "doula" which comes from the Greek: a woman who serves. The title Doula has now common parlance in the Western world.



A doula is now recognized as a trained & experienced professional who provides continuous physical, emotional & informational support to the mother before, during & immediately after parturition and practical support in the postpartum period. The primary role of the ND Doula is as a support and resource for health & birth care. They do not replace a midwife nor any other healthcare practitioner but are a complimentary form of healthcare for the mother & baby. Studies have shown that when doulas attend births, labours are shorter, have fewer complications, babies are healthier and they breastfeed more easily. (Almon, Knapp)

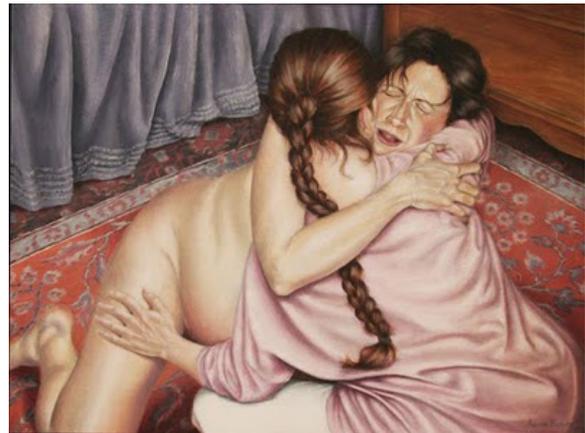
Natural Childbirth Consciousness

The Doula helps lead out of the mother her "natural state" of consciousness by providing education and an aura of safety.

Women seek what they believe is a "safe" place in order to give birth.

"When a woman is in labour, a little fight goes on in the woman's consciousness. One faculty of her consciousness, the intellect, will tell her that she should do certain things. Perhaps those are things that she learned in childbirth classes; perhaps those are things that other people have told her that she should do to cope with birth. But from another part of the consciousness will come an urge so deep within her that it will compel her to move her body and to use her voice in a completely different way. Those are her deep instincts about childbirth, but we have buried these for so long that most of us have forgotten that knowledge. Occasionally, though, I see women who remember..."

Whitridge, Candace. *The Instinct of Birth*. Published in the spring 1994 (Vol. 1, No. 1) issue of *THE BIRTHKIT*, a Publication of the Midwifery Today Association Copyright 1994, Midwifery Today, Inc.



Nutritive

A Nutritive Tea to be used throughout the pregnancy:

Rubus idaeus fol. Nutritive, Uterine toner, Astringent

Urtica dioica herba Nutritive, Astringent, Mild diuretic, Tonic, Hypotensive

Medicago sativa fol. Nutritive, Anti-anaemic, Tonic

Althea off. fol. Nutritive, Demulcent, Anti-inflammatory, Mild diuretic

Use in combination and drink:

1 cup in the 1st trimester, 2 cups in the 2nd trimester, 3 cups in the 3rd trimester

To draw out all of the nutritive minerals, steep overnight with 1 tsp. of apple cider vinegar. Add Blackstrap molasses to provide more minerals & iron.



John Michael Carter, Carter American, Impressionist, Art Paintings, Carter Paintings, Artodyssey John, Art Center, 1970 Carter

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/476607573036622003/>

Partus Preparation & Birthing Herbs

The last few weeks before the expected delivery of the baby herbs may be used to prepare the body. It is possible to help speed up the ripening of the cervix using herbs. It is also possible to have the uterus ready and primed. The following herbs may be used in combination to tonify the uterus and facilitate childbirth:

Mitchella repens Uterine tonic,

Partus preperator

Cimicifuga racemosa Antispasmodic, Oestrogenic (SERM), Uterine tonic,

Partus preperator

Caulophyllum thalictroides Emmenagogue, Oestrogenic (SERM), (*hot water extract*)*

Uterine tonic, Partus preperator

Zingiber officinalis Antispasmodic,

Pelvic decongestant, Prostaglandin inhibitor

Dosage: 5 mls 2 to 3 times per day until labour begins.

Partus Preparation

Caulophyllum controversy

From Paul Berger, Medical Herbalist:

- Early historical use based on Rafinesque
- Eclectic use widespread & longterm use of tincture combinations
- Always in combination, Eclectic & Mother's Cordial
- Water decoction, historical use
- Tincture use in very small amounts or proportions
- Never used as a capsule or tablet because they isolate & concentrate the alkaloids that caused the adverse cardiovascular events.

Midwives rarely use it as a single and it was never used historically as a powdered extract in capsule nor tablet form.

See the works of Dugoua & Seely (Canadian Journal of Clinical Pharmacology) and Paul Bergner in Medical Herbalism for long discussion.

Partus preparation

Mother's cordial (tincture + sugar syrup)

16 parts *Mitchella repens*

1 part *Viburnum opulus*

1 part *Caulophyllum thalactroides*

1 part *Chamaelirium luteum*

In use for over 100 years and is still available now (Sharol Tilgner ND makes it in Oregon).

Even in tincture form we have 1 part *Caulophyllum thalactroides* in 19 which is approximately 5% and it has no reporting of adverse events. Fetal monitoring is relevantly new and most likely the people who receive it are using it are not using herbal products. There is not a lot of adverse events in the midwifery reports even with its use.

Perineal Massage

During the last 2 months of pregnancy the perineal area needs to be prepared for the delivery.

- Massage oil blend:
- 1/4 teaspoon of Jojoba oil and 1 drop of *Pelargonium graveolens* (Geranium)
- One or two capsules of Evening Primrose oil may also be broken and used for massage

This blend can then be used at least once per day massaged on the perineal area.

Uterine Tonics

Stimulate the uterine muscles to a higher state of tonus.

Caulophyllum thalactroides – very strong contracting stimulant (use in small amounts only in combinations)

Chamaelirium luteum – used for holding the fetus when there is a strong sensation of downward falling energies, also for prolapse, haemorrhage, leukorrhoea & menorrhagia.

Cimicifuga racemosa – so many analgesic properties associated around uterine

musculature & other striated muscles of the body.

Lamium album – traditional European use for prolapse.

Mitchella repens – this is the GO TO herb of the North American natives for partus preparation & birthing

Rubus idaeus fol. – traditional European & North American nutritive & tonic

Uterine Antispasmodics

These herbs relax over stimulated (spasmodic) & inflamed uterine muscles.

Cimicifuga racemosa

Leonurus cardiaca

Viburnum opulus

Viburnum prunifolium

Threatened Miscarriage

Formula:

Chamaelirium luteum – holds back the unnatural downward motion of birthing

Viburnum opulus – a holding property by relaxing the urgent pushing of the contractions of birth

Viburnum prunifolium – a holding property by relaxing the urgent pushing of the contractions of birth

Vitex agnus-castus – for hormonal regulation to maintain the progesterone levels

Compound equal parts of tincture.

Use 5mL TID for the first trimester or two weeks past the date of previous miscarriages.

Herbs for Birthing

Birthing herbs are only to be used once labour has begun, may be added to the mother's cordial:

Hydrastis canadensis – oxytocic

Aralia racemosa – cervical ripening

Schizandra chinensis - cervical ripening

Caulophyllum thalictroides – uterine stimulant

Herbs to be used EXTERNALLY

- A non-toxic lip balm of the mother's preference can be very useful during labour for dry chapping lips.
- *Aralia racemosa* – cervical ripening
- *Schizandra chinensis* - cervical ripening
- *Caulophyllum thalictroides* – uterine stimulant
- A massage oil made from an infused oil of *Hypericum perforatum* with added essential oils such as *Jasminum off.* (Jasmine), *Lavendula off.*, *Rosa canina* (Rose) or *Cananga odorata var. genuina* (Ylang Ylang) can be very soothing and relaxing for any time.
- Hot compresses can help reduce pain in labour; Linseed is a good one.

Mastitis

Drink a lot of water and empty the breasts. Cabbage leaf poultice topically: Cut out the midrib and roll the leaf with a rolling pin or a wine bottle to bruise the leaves and make them wet. Apply layers of leaf over each breast and hold in place with saran wrap and a tight t-shirt

Fomentation of Ginger & Chamomile: soak cloth in an infusion of *Zingiber off.* & *Matricaria recutita* and apply to breast

Internal Treatment:

Berberines:

Hydrastis, *Berberis* or *Coptis*: Antimicrobial

Echinacea angustifolia: Antimicrobial
5mL every 2 to 4 hrs.

Matricaria recutita: Anti-inflammatory

Mentha piperita & *Sambucus nigra flos*:
Anti-pyretic

PUPPS: Pruritic Urticarial Papules and Plaques of Pregnancy

External treatment

- Bathe with *Avena*, *Hamamelis* & Aloe vera in the tub

Internal treatment

Nervine/Sedatives:

- *Eschscholzia californica*, *Passiflora incarnata*

Alteratives: *Rumex crispus*

For Striae gravidarum *Centella asiatica*

Anti-inflammatories: *Glycyrrhiza glabra*,
Bupleurum falcatum

Immunomodulator & Adaptogen:

Ganoderma spp.

CONCERNS OF PREGNANCY

Urinary Tract Infections

Ensure proper hygiene, avoid sugar , increase probiotics, Unsweetened cranberry juice can help with some forms of cystitis.

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi Antimicrobial, Antiseptic, Demulcent, Urinary anti-inflammatory

Agathosma betulina Antimicrobial, Anti-inflammatory, Antiseptic, Diuretic

Echinacea angustifolia Antiseptic, Antimicrobial, Antiviral, Antiprotozoal, Anti-inflammatory, Immunomodulator, Lymphatic

Juniperus communis Antimicrobial, Antiseptic, Anti-inflammatory, Antiviral, Diuretic

Usnea barbata Antimicrobial, Antiseptic, Antifungal, Antiviral, Anti-inflammatory, Demulcent

Solidago odoratum Antimicrobial, Antiseptic, Antifungal, Anticatarrhal,

Astringent, Aquaretic,
Urinary Anti-inflammatory

Taraxacum officinalis fol.

Anti-inflammatory, Postassium-sparing
Diuretic, Urinary tonic

Cold & Flu

Allium sativum has antibacterial, antimicrobial and antiviral properties. It can be eaten raw or as a tincture.

Sambucus nigra fruc. Anticatarrhal, Antioxidant, Antiviral, Diaphoretic

Rosa canina Antioxidant, Astringent,
Aperient, high in vitamin C
Sambucus nigra flos. Diaphoretic, Diuretic
Echinacea angustifolia Antimicrobial,
Antiviral, Immunostimulant
Eupatorium perfoliatum Diaphoretic,
Immunostimulant
Usnea barbata Antimicrobial,
Immunostimulant
Glycyrrhiza glabra Adaptogen, Antiviral,
Immunostimulant

Consider a wet sheet or wet sock treatment
for reducing high fevers.

Haemorrhoids

Sitz bath with salt & *Hamemmelis virginica*
ext.

Add sea salts to a warm sitz bath and then
use a 60mL *Hamemmelis virginica* from a
squeeze bottle, stir it up and sit inside.

Use *Hamemmelis virginica* wipes after every
bowel movement.

Apply *Aesculus hippocastanum* cream ad
lib.