

Cesarean



From [Robin Elise Weiss, LCCE](#),
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Do I need a doula?

The cesarean surgery rate in the United States alone is about 23%. This means that nearly one in four women will give birth via major surgery. This surgery may be planned in advance or may be done during labor in either an emergent or non-emergent basis. The question is, does professional labor support in the way of a doula help?

Scheduled Cesarean Sections

You may find that you need to schedule the delivery date of your baby to be born via c-section. The need for this can be for many reasons. If this is how you are giving birth you will still need support from other people. A doula is the perfect person to help give you this support.

A doula is (usually) a woman who is trained to help women and their families while giving birth, whether than birth be a vaginal birth or a surgical birth.

A doula can bring in another set of hands and eyes and ears to help you better prepare for your upcoming surgical birth. She can help you get answers to your questions and formulate a birth plan for a cesarean section. Sometimes your doula can even help you by offering you an educational class on cesarean section.

During the pre-operative period, your doula can help explain procedures to you and help you get answers to any questions that you have, much like she would during a normal labor setting. Your doula can help you manage painful procedures like the administration of an IV, or even the spinal or epidural anesthesia for your surgery.

Once inside the operating room, your doula will assist you in knowing what is going on by giving you details of whatever you wish to know. Your surgeon and assistants are busy doing the surgery. The nurses are preparing the room for the baby. Your husband is awaiting the baby and will soon go to the warmer to greet the baby. Your doula will be at your side. She can take photos if you desire, particularly after the baby is born. She can remind the staff of any special requests you may have, like letting your husband announce the gender of the baby or a quiet room during the birth.

If your baby needs to go to the nursery, your husband can go with the baby. Your doula stays by your side. She can also act as a liaison between the staff and you for getting updates on baby while you are separated.

One important fact to remember about the cesarean is that the baby is born in the first few minutes. The rest of the nearly hour long procedure is the repair. If your husband is busy with the baby or in the nursery, you would otherwise be alone during this period. Some of the moms I have worked with said having a doula for this period alone was awesome and prevented them from becoming frightened.

During the postpartum period your doula can suggest post-operative comfort measures. She can assist you with any breastfeeding questions you may have or special help you or baby may require with breastfeeding. Your doula can also help with reminding the staff about your birth plan and special needs you may have.

Unscheduled Cesareans

Your doula will be able to provide all of the above services for you should the need for a cesarean come up during your labor. If you have an emergency cesarean, her role as well as the role of your other support people may be extremely limited during the actual surgery. However, in the recovery and postpartum periods she will again be able to resume those functions.

In general, the idea of using a doula for a cesarean, particularly a scheduled cesarean, is not an unusual one. Many couples find that they benefit from the supportive and informative services of this extra set of trained hands during a surgical birth. Be sure to talk to each of the doulas you interview about their experience with surgical birth. Ask them to explain how they believe that they could help you during this surgery.