



## Doula Jill Says

**This month:**  
Doulas and dads

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### **How can I explain to my husband that a doula won't replace him at our baby's birth?**

This is a great question for you and your husband to explore with doulas you're interviewing. A quality doula can clearly communicate, in words and in deeds, that your marriage or partnership is the primary relationship, while your association with a doula has a beginning, middle, and end. For example, in a prenatal session, I'll often bring a foot soak for the mom and, as her feet are immersed, ask the dad to simply hold her hand and be present. It marks a beautiful moment in the pregnancy, with lovely music playing and sweet smells of essential oils, but it also demonstrates her triad of support for labor—the expectant dad alongside the mom-to-be and the doula positioned at her feet.

Have your husband ask the doulas you meet with how they plan to involve him in labor. Also, you might try sharing with him these real-life birth anecdotes from my practice that show dads' importance in the delivery room:

- One father learned a chant in a prenatal visit and quietly but powerfully sang it to his laboring wife; she was enraptured in his arms hearing their baby's birth song.
- Another dad said out loud to his partner how beautiful and how powerful she was while preparing for a Cesarean birth.
- A third father sat in the hospital bathroom for more than two hours, holding his wife's shoulders as she pushed on the toilet, whispering affirmations in Italian in her ear.
- One more dad typed out a psalm and put it in his left-hand pocket; later, while his newborn baby was in the warmer, he whispered it in baby's ear.