

# **INFORMED CONSENT AND MONITRICE AGREEMENT**

**Heather Eckstein**

## **A Birth To Remember Childbirth Services**

I am an Independent Doula and Monitrice currently working on completing my apprenticeship training to be a Certified Professional Midwife. I am currently a Bachelor's Degree candidate at Midwives College of Utah and am working towards taking the National Association of Registered Midwives board exam and receiving my Certified Professional Midwife credential. I am not a nurse midwife or a physician and I am not licensed by the state of Georgia.

I have been attending births since 2005. I completed my doula training and initial certification through DONA. I have been a La Leche Leader since 2007 and was previously an ICAN Chapter Leader. I have eight children and my personal birth experiences have included a medicated hospital birth, two cesareans, HBAC of twins, and two HBA2C waterbirths.

### **WHAT IS A MONITRICE?**

The word "monitrice" is French for a person who monitors, coaches, and instructs. A monitrice provides physical, emotional, and informational support similar to a birth doula. The difference between a monitrice and doula is the monitrice's ability to provide limited clinical skills in the home setting.

A monitrice is typically a doula with additional midwifery training. These additional skills allow her to monitor labor progress. Neither a monitrice nor doula will deliver your baby. You are still responsible for arranging your own obstetrical and pediatric care.

Monitrice care is particularly helpful for first-time mothers, VBAC mothers, or any expectant mother planning to stay at home as long as possible during labor.

### **INITIAL CONSULTATION**

There is not a charge for this service regardless of whether or not we decide to work together. I consider it to be an honor and my privilege to serve soon-to-be parents in this capacity. It is my desire to help change the consciousness of childbirth in our culture and hopefully this service is a small step in that direction.

### **HISTORY AND INITIAL MEETING**

Based on our initial meeting, if we mutually decide to work together, a payment of \$300 is due which will be applied to the total fee. This payment is non-refundable.

## **TOTAL FEE**

The total fee for a labor Monitrice is \$900, which is to be fully paid at the time of the final prenatal visit approximately 3-4 weeks before your due date. The fee covers services that are provided by myself and/or my backup doula. The backup doula does NOT provide any medical services at all.

## **SERVICES PROVIDED**

The services include: two prenatal home visits, labor services and postpartum care at 24 hours by phone and 1 week at your home. During your labor I will inform you of your baby's heart tones, your blood pressure numbers, your temperature and heart rate and an estimate of the dilation (opening) of the cervix, if desired and mutually consented. These are not for diagnostic purposes and are for informational purposes only. I am not a doctor, nurse, EMT or other medical professional. The decisions for your care rest with you and your obstetrician or midwife. I can not make medical decisions for you.

Also during your labor I will provide physical, mental and emotional support in forms such as massage, hydrotherapy (shower/tub), relaxation suggestions, visualizations, timing contractions, affirmations, position suggestions, acupressure, warm compresses, cool cloths, and reminding the mother to drink to keep hydrated. After the birth I will facilitate the initiation of breastfeeding, and discuss of what to expect postpartum. I will do my best to inform you during labor of your options and help you to learn the information needed to make informed consent. I am available for phone consult immediately upon hire to answer any questions you may have prior to your labor.

Usually there is ample time to transport to the hospital, but occasionally we must deal with a complication or a high-risk situation at home. In the event of an emergent birth, 911 will be called.

Once we have reached the hospital, my support will be purely emotional, mental and physical. I can not listen to your baby, assess dilation or act as a medical professional in the hospital setting. I can not speak to the hospital staff on your behalf.

Should your labor go longer than 12 hours, I reserve the right to sleep briefly if possible, or call in my backup for further support. I can not take care of you if I do not take care of me.

## **PAYMENT**

I understand that finances can be a problem at times, so please feel free to discuss with me any problems you might have. It is very important that we communicate about everything! My main goal, of course, is for you to have a safe and joyous birth experience.

## **POLICY**

If I should miss your birth due to circumstances relating to me (emergency, illness, etc.) and my backup doula also does not attend your birth, your payments will be refunded minus the deposit and \$40 for each prenatal performed. If I should miss your birth through no fault of

my own (fast labor, you decide not to call, or don't call in time, or staff does not admit me to your birth) or in the case of a planned or unplanned cesarean section, I will still collect the balance due. If I am notified when your labor begins and kept in touch with during labor, it is extremely rare that I would miss your birth. Because of my work as a midwife's apprentice, it is possible I would be called away to another birth. Should this happen, my backup doula will take over for me.

No other refunds will be given unless other arrangements are made prior to the beginning of labor.

**The expectant parents affirm the following:**

I/We have discussed my/our prenatal care and birth options with physicians and other knowledgeable people to the extent that I/we feel is necessary. Heather Eckstein has gone over the information in the previous pages and has discussed her philosophy and experience with me/us. Before signing this agreement I/we have had the opportunity to talk with (each other and) Heather Eckstein and to ask her any questions I/we wish. In addition to the other agreements above, I/we also fully understand and agree as follows:

1. I/we believe that birth is a natural, safe process. I/We, however, discussed some of the problems which can arise in childbirth such as: abruptio placenta, placenta previa, malpresentations, prolapsed cord, toxemia, shoulder dystocia, hemorrhage, birth defects, genetic disorders, meconium stained fluids, newborn respiratory distress and stillbirth.
2. I/We agree to participate in a natural childbirth class unless Heather Eckstein specifically indicates that this is not necessary due to my/our previous experiences or personal preferences.
3. I/We understand that the fees we pay, in advance, to Heather Eckstein are expected to cover only services and items provided by her or her backup.
4. I/We agree that if, based on information gathered, the standard of care would dictate hospital care, we will transport to the hospital sooner than planned.
5. I/We realize that the responsibility for all of the above lies entirely with the family and reflects the ideal circumstances under which to have a safe labor at home.

**Additional Responsibilities of the Pregnant Woman and Her Family**

1. To take excellent care of her health
2. To share relevant information about their care and their status, both physical and psychological, and to keep appointments and other agreements.
3. To educate themselves about pregnancy, nutrition, childbirth, newborn care and breastfeeding

4. To respond in a reasonable and cooperative manner in the event of a complication or emergency
5. To arrange for a responsible caretaker for the older siblings present.
6. To notify me immediately when labor begins or when any signs of impending labor are present such as loss of mucous plug, strong contractions that won't diminish in strength or frequency, rupture of membranes (water breaking). I must make arrangements for my children, so please take this into consideration – even if you think it may be a false alarm.

Based upon the understanding of the above, Heather Eckstein and the client/couple each promise to work to establish an atmosphere of trust and cooperation that will contribute to a rewarding birth experience.

I/We \_\_\_\_\_ are expecting a baby and have requested the services of an independent monitrice to assist us during the prenatal period and with the monitoring of our labor in our home. I/We have read the Informed Disclosure statement, which includes a statement of philosophy, education and experience. I/We understand that Heather Eckstein of A BIRTH TO REMEMBER CHILDBIRTH SERVICES is an independent Monitrice and Doula. All of my/our questions regarding her background and experience have been answered to my/our satisfaction. We understand that I/we may terminate services at any time. By signing this statement, I/we affirm these things of my/our own free will and fully accept any and all risks and responsibilities for laboring at home and the health of our selves and our baby.

Client \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Partner/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Heather Eckstein \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_