A birth scarf is simply a long piece of fabric that is used as a tool during birth. They can also be used during pregnancy and postpartum.

→ You can purchase birth scarves through online retailers. Also called rebozos, it’s only an authentic rebozo if it’s made in Mexico or Central America. Using rebozos for birth support is part of their culture.

→ You can use a woven wrap intended for babywearing.

→ Or you can buy some fabric and make your own with basic sewing skills. 9 or 10 feet is a good length. I’d recommend about 24 inches wide. Good fabrics are strong and durable that you can really pull on: linen, jacquard cotton (think fabric tablecloth), cotton, or silk. You don’t want anything that stretches easily, tears easily, or is thin. You want the fabric to be continuous without sewing pieces together.

→ Women have also used a bed sheet when a proper birth scarf was not available. You can use a spare sheet at the hospital for labor and delivery.
**DURING PREGNANCY**

These techniques can also all be used during labor.

**Sifting**
- Sifting the boat: Lay the birth scarf out on floor. Have the woman lay in the center of the scarf with the bottom of the scarf just under her buttocks. Take both ends of the scarf and gently rock side to side.
- Belly sifting: Have her get on hands and knees or on her knees while resting her arms on a couch or birthing ball. Wrap the middle of the scarf around her belly. Take the sides of the scarf and gently lift the belly and sift.

**Lifting**
- Abdominal lift with a partner behind pulling up on the scarf
- Abdominal lift with back crisscrossed and the woman pulling over her shoulders to lift the belly
  - With this technique, add support by having her partner come behind her to lift up from her lower belly.
- You can also have her sitting on a birth ball and wrap the scarf around her belly gently pulling up from behind her to take some pressure off.

**Counter pressure**
- With the woman on hands and knees, wrap the scarf around her belly bringing the sides of the scarf together over her lower back. Using one hand to gently tug on the scarf (pulling up towards you), use your other hand to apply counter pressure to the sacrum.
- Tie a big knot in the back and have her lean into for counter pressure (example: with her back against a wall).
- In the bullet point below, it describes using a scarf to tie a heat pack on her back. You can lower this hot corn bag or rice pack to the sacrum and lean against the wall for mild counter pressure or have someone press their hand into the corn bag.

**Other methods**
- A scarf can also be used to tie an ice pack or heat pack (corn bag, rice sock, etc) on her lower back leaving her free to walk around.
- Shake the apple tree.
**DURING LABOR**

**For squatting**
- Over the door rope: Tie a big knot in one end of the scarf. Throw that over the door and close the door leaving the unknotted portion to hang on the side that you are. You can then use that scarf as a rope to lean into as you squat. Lean on the side of the door that is opposite of the way it swings (If a bedroom door swings in, lean on the hallway side of the door instead of the bedroom side so it can’t swing on you).
- The door knob squat: Find the middle of the scarf. Leaving the door hanging open, wrap the scarf around both sides of the door handle. Use the scarf as support while squatting.
- If you are in a hospital and the bed has a birth bar, you can wrap the scarf around that and use it to assist in a squat. You can also straddle a peanut ball or sit on a birth ball in front of the birth bar and use a scarf to lean into.
- Have a partner sit in a chair with the scarf over their shoulders. The laboring woman can squat in front of the chair and lean into the scarf for stabilization.
- With two partners, you can use a birth scarf for a lap squat. Have one partner sit in a chair with knees apart. Have the laboring woman sit on that partner’s lap facing them (straddling). The second partner is behind the person in the chair. Using a scarf under that woman, she can gently drop her hips and hang between the seated partner’s knees.

**Other methods**
- Use the scarf for a double hip squeeze with two people.
- Use it with the seated knee press (counter pressure).
- Spread the scarf over the partner’s shoulders. She can then grip the scarf and lean into her partner.

**DURING DELIVERY**

- Throw the scarf over the birth bar on the hospital bed to pull on while squatting or semi-reclined.
- Tug-of-war: Have a support person use the scarf as a tug of war while she is bringing her baby down.
**POSTPARTUM**

- Belly support can be a comfort postpartum. You can wrap the scarf around the postpartum belly and tie it in the back or wrap it around again and tie it to the side. Side note: If you find like that, look into Bengkung belly binding.
- If a scarf is long enough and made of durable material, it can be used for babywearing.
- If there are no fringes, use it as a baby blanket.
- You can use it as a nursing cover.

**OTHER OPTIONS**

- You can wear it as a long scarf. Depending on the fabric and pattern, you may be able to cut it in half to make two scarves.
- If it’s decorative fabric, toss it on the back of the couch as decoration.

There are a few things you do NOT want to do with a birth scarf.

- Do not try to flip a breech or reposition a baby with this.
- You do not want to jiggle or sift rigorously when using any abdominal support techniques. Always be gentle. You are handling a baby as well.
- Ask your provider before using if you have an anterior placenta.