
How Is it wrong to have an abortion?

Some religions think that abortions are wrong, while other religions teach that abortion is a woman's choice. Many people believe that abortion is a responsible decision when a woman cannot handle the pregnancy or properly take care of a child.

Women who decide to have an abortion take motherhood seriously. Most Canadians agree that women faced with an unplanned, unwanted pregnancy should be able to choose an abortion.

How do I get an abortion?

You can just call a clinic that performs abortions (listed below) and make an appointment. The clinic may want you to get an ultrasound before your abortion - they can either do it right at the clinic, or help arrange it for you somewhere else.

You don't need a doctor's referral unless you get an abortion at a [hospital](#). A sympathetic doctor would have to arrange this for you.

Where can I go for more information or counselling?

Here are some people, organizations, and clinics that you can ask for more information about pregnancy or abortion:

- ◆ Your school nurse or family doctor
- ◆ **Pregnancy Options Line:** 604-875-3163 (outside Lower Mainland call 1-888-875-3163)
- ◆ **Facts of Life Line:** 604-731-7803 (outside Lower Mainland call 1-800-739-7367)
- ◆ **Options for Sexual Health** (formerly Planned Parenthood): 604-731-4252

- ◆ **Everywoman's Health Centre:**
2525 Commercial Drive, Vancouver. 604-322-6692
(surgical abortions up to 13 weeks, 6 days)
www.everywomanshealthcentre.ca/
- ◆ **Elizabeth Bagshaw Women's Clinic:**
Ste. 200 – 1177 W. Broadway, Vancouver. 604-736-7878
(surgical abortions up to 16 weeks, 6 days)
www.elizabethbagshawclinic.ca/
- ◆ **C.A.R.E. Program:**
BC Women's Hospital: 4500 Oak Street, Vancouver.
604-875-2022 (surgical abortions up to 18 weeks)
www.bcwomens.ca/care
- ◆ **Willow Women's Clinic:**
Ste. 1013 – 750 W. Broadway, Vancouver. 604-709-5611
(medical abortions up to 7 weeks, using methotrexate)
www.medicalabortion.ca/
- ◆ **Vancouver Island Women's Clinic:**
Victoria. 250-480-7338 (medical abortions up to 7 weeks in-office, surgical abortions up to 22 weeks)
www.viwomensclinic.ca/
- ◆ **Women's Services Clinic:**
Kelowna General Hospital: 2268 Pandosy Street, Kelowna. 250-979-0251 (surgical abortions up to 14 weeks)

Be careful - there are some groups that offer pregnancy counselling, but who are against abortion. They won't give you any information on abortion, and may even try and talk you out of it. Such groups include Birthright and Crisis Pregnancy Centre.

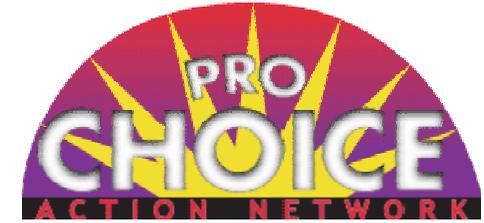
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Information for Teenagers About Abortion

This article will answer many of your questions about abortion. If you want more information, contact one of the groups or agencies listed at the end.

What is an abortion?

An abortion is the ending of a pregnancy. The embryo or fetus is removed from the woman's uterus. In an average abortion, the fetus is about 3 cm long. Scientists tell us that the fetus has no awareness and no pain sensations until after the fifth month of pregnancy.

Is it legal to have an abortion?

YES. Abortions are legal in Canada. You can have an abortion at either a hospital or a clinic that performs abortions. In BC, some designated [hospitals](#) perform abortions.

How much does an abortion cost?

Abortions are free in BC if you have medical coverage. (There may also be a charge for medications not covered by MSP.) You can get medical coverage as long as you've lived in BC for the last three months. If you are covered under someone else's medical plan (like your parents), and you don't want them to find out, don't worry - information on

abortion for teenagers is always kept confidential by the Ministry of Health.

If you're new to the Province and don't have medical coverage, the cost for an early abortion is about \$450 to \$600. If you can't afford it, talk to one of the clinics, or contact the Pregnancy Options Line at 1-888-875-3163 (within Lower Mainland, 604-875-3163). Clinics may be able to help with funding or payment plans in special circumstances.

Do I need a parent's consent to have an abortion?

Not in BC. However, doctors often encourage teens to tell a parent or another important adult, to help them with emotional support. Hospitals and clinics are obligated to keep secret the names of teenagers who have abortions.

How late in a pregnancy can an abortion be done?

An abortion should be done as early as possible. Most abortions are done during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. Medical abortions (using pills) can only be done up until about the seventh week of pregnancy. Surgical abortions on request can be done after the fifth week of pregnancy in most cases, and up to 14 to 18 weeks in a clinic, or 22 weeks in a hospital.

Abortions are also available after 22 weeks in the rare event that your life or health becomes seriously threatened by the pregnancy, or in cases of serious fetal abnormality.

Medicare-funded abortions on request can be obtained in Victoria BC, Sherbrooke Quebec, and London Ontario up to about 22 or 23 weeks. Abortions on request can also be obtained in Washington State up to 26 weeks gestation.

Contact the Pregnancy Options Line at 1-888-875-3163 (within Lower Mainland, 604-875-3163) for more information on 2nd and 3rd trimester abortions, and for assistance in

obtaining such abortions out-of-province, as well as help or advice in covering costs.

How safe is an abortion?

Abortions are extremely safe - it is one of the safest medical operations of all, and many times safer than childbirth. The earlier the abortion, the lower the chance of complications.

If I have an abortion, can I still have children later on?

Yes. Women who have an early abortion, even more than one abortion, are just as likely as women in general to have a healthy baby in the future.

What happens during an abortion?

In a surgical abortion, the woman lies on an examining table so the doctor can see into her vagina to find her cervix, which is the opening to her uterus. Then the doctor will either use a local anesthetic to freeze the cervix, or a brief general anesthetic to make her unconscious for a short time.

To remove the contents of her uterus, the doctor gradually opens the cervix and inserts a small tube. This tube is attached to a machine that gently suctions the inside of the uterus. The doctor then carefully checks the inside of the uterus to be sure no tissue remains.

The entire procedure takes about 10 minutes. Afterwards, the woman usually has some bleeding, like a menstrual period. You'll probably be at the clinic for about 3 or 4 hours, however, to allow for counselling time and recovery.

Is an abortion painful?

Local or general anesthetics are used before an abortion to control pain. Most women feel cramps (like strong period cramps) for a short time. If a woman needs it, the doctor will give her extra medication for any pain.

How will I feel after an abortion?

Most women feel relief after their abortion and are satisfied that they have made the right decision for themselves.

Some women feel sad or emotional for a few days or weeks afterwards and may find a supportive friend or counsellor very helpful at this time. These feelings usually fade within a short time.

Researchers have found that having an abortion does not make women feel bad about themselves years later. In general, women decide on abortion because being pregnant at that time is in some way wrong for them.

Do many teenagers have abortions?

Yes. About half of pregnant teenagers choose to have an abortion. About 20,000 teenagers have abortions in Canada each year.

Unfortunately, many teenagers often decide to have an abortion too late in their pregnancies. Either they don't realize that they are pregnant, or they don't know what to do about it.

What are the alternatives to abortion?

If you decide not to have an abortion, you can continue the pregnancy and have the baby. Then you can either keep it, or place it for adoption.

If you decide to have the baby, some single teenage mothers can get welfare or mother's allowance. If you decide to place the baby for adoption, you may be able to choose the family you want to adopt your child. Check the web site of the Ministry for Children and Family Development for information and support. (www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/adoption/direct_placement.htm)

Remember, it's your decision - not your boyfriend's or your parents' or anyone else's. Try to get some support to help you make the best decision for you.