
Is abortion safe?

Accurate statistics are not available since most abortion clinics keep poor records, and are not required to report complications. Also women who have problems afterwards are unlikely to return to a facility where they believe they got poor care. But abortion carries with it serious risks. Some problems are apparent right away: heavy bleeding; perforation of the uterus, bowel, or bladder; laceration of the cervix; and death. Others show up only afterwards, such as pelvic infection due to retained fetal parts (which can cause sterility), and problems with future pregnancies. As pregnancy progresses, the radical procedures required to remove the fetus are more likely to harm her.

Can abortion affect my future?

Even one abortion significantly increases chances of miscarriage, premature birth (which increases risk of a handicapped child), inability to get pregnant for the first time because her reproductive organs are delicate and not yet fully developed. With each additional abortion the risks increase. Recent research has also uncovered a link between abortion and breast cancer.¹

How does a girl feel when she has an abortion?

Most girls cry before their abortion and have mixed feelings. There is almost always pain, sometimes severe pain; and almost all women find it upsetting and a bad experience. In the case of chemical abortions, the dead fetus may be expelled hours or even days after she leaves the clinic, which can be traumatic.

How does a girl feel afterwards?

At first she may try to block her feelings and say it was nothing. But psychologists working with women who

have had abortions consistently find deep guilt feelings at an unconscious level which frequently cause depression, anger, and difficulties in building good relationships with men. Nightmares, substance abuse, and suicidal impulses are not uncommon, and feelings of grief and loss may well—up powerfully many years after the abortion²

How is the father of the baby affected?

Recently researchers have begun to realize that abortion is also emotionally traumatic for the father. At first, some men feel relieved; others feel powerless and angry. But whatever their initial reaction, they also experience guilt, isolation, and anger at themselves and their partners. Males may require as much emotional support as females. Since it takes two to make a pregnancy, both are involved in the result.

How are relationships affected?

Abortion researchers have found that the great majority of relationships between single people broke up after an abortion.

But is it really a baby or a clump of cells?

Here are some facts scientists have discovered about the unborn to help you decide:

- By the time a girl finds out she is pregnant, the heart is already beating (21-22 days from conception).
- Movement has been recorded as early as day 36.



Heartbeat of a 185gram Human fetus

- By six weeks it has eyes, mouth, arms, legs, hands and feet, and responds to touch.
- Brainwaves have been measured as early as 5 weeks (3 weeks after first missed period). By the 7-8th week they are similar to an adult's brainwaves, and it can be determined whether it's awake or asleep.
- At 8 weeks all its organs are present. Fingers and toes are fully formed, and it has the fingerprints it will have all its life.
- By weeks 9-10 it is very responsive to touch, hands make a fist when touched; lips pucker and try to suck. Male sex organs are visible. Secretes urine.
- By 11-12 weeks all its organs are functioning and it is practicing activities it will perform later in life—sucking its thumb, swallowing, breathing (fluid), etc.

Is it part of the mother?

No. It is a wholly distinct individual, swimming freely in a sac of fluid and only connected to the mother by the umbilical cord for nourishment. It has its own brain and nervous system. Its blood supply is separate and may be a different blood type from the mother's. Its unique genetic code combines the genetic heritage of both parents in a way that marks it as a family member. If allowed to develop, this individual will, for example, have his grandfather's tall and lanky build, or her mother's musical talent.

How are abortions done?

Suction curettage- This is the most common form of abortion used during the first twelve weeks of pregnancy. The first step is to force open the tightly-closed muscle at the neck of the uterus (the cervix) with a series of metal rods called dilators. The abortionist then uses a suction curette which is attached to a powerful vacuum, to scrape and pull the fetus and placenta from the wall of the uterus. A curette (sharp, spoon-shaped knife) is then usually passed over the inside of the uterus to make sure it is clear.

Non-Surgical abortions- Powerful artificial hormones may also be used to induce abortion during the 1st trimester. She is first given a pill (e.g., RU 486) or an injection which causes the nutrient-rich lining of the uterus to deteriorate. Deprived of nutrients and fluids, the developing baby starves to death. Then on her next visit to the clinic she is given prostaglandin which brings on labor to expel the dead embryo/fetus (which may happen at home or work later). Finally she must return to be sure the abortion is complete, and a surgical abortion is performed to remove any retained parts of the placenta or fetus that remain.

After 12 weeks the following are different types of abortions that may be used:

Dilation and Evacuation-(2nd trimester) The cervix is dilated as in suction abortions, but as the fetus becomes larger and harder to remove, the abortionist must use a special instrument with sharp metal jaws to dismember it. He or she then vacuums it out piece by piece, crushing the skull and removing it carefully so the bone doesn't damage her cervix.

Partial birth abortions (after 18 weeks) involve delivering the whole baby leaving the head inside the womb, where a needle is inserted into the skull and brains sucked out so that the head can be easily crushed and removed. These are now illegal.

Late chemical abortions- Sometimes a toxin (such as salt or urea) is injected into the amniotic fluid sac surrounding the baby to kill it, followed by prostaglandin which initiates premature labor to expel it. Salt is now seldom used due to danger to the mother. Prostaglandin can be used alone, but may result in a live birth unless something is done to kill it. A baby can survive outside the womb as early as 20-22weeks.

Does it feel pain?

The brain and nervous system develop very early, enabling the fetus to respond to touch. It pulls away from a painful stimulus such as a needle prick as early as 7-8 weeks. Thus it seems clear that it would also feel the more traumatic procedures involved in an abortion, even though it can't talk to us

★ *How is the father of the baby affected?*

★ *How are relationships affected?*

★ *Is it a baby that's alive or just a clump of cells?*

★ *Is it part of the mother?*

★ *Does it have brainwaves?*

★ *How are abortions done?*

★ *Does it feel pain?*

THE FACTS?



WHERE TO GO FOR HELP
If you think you may be pregnant... Know that you are not alone. Different groups provide different services, but confidential pregnancy testing counseling, medical care, information on options available to you, legal assistance, and help with material needs are available out there.

For referral to help in your area, call the crisis pregnancy hotline: 1-800-848-5683

You could also Google up www.optionline.org or go to www.standupgirl.com for teen pregnancy support, testimonials and stories. If someone is trying to force you to get an abortion, call 866-4-OUTCRY.

If you have had an abortion: It is normal to hurt after an abortion. Talk with someone who will understand. Call Project Rachel @ 1-800-932-2273, or go to www.afterabortion.org and click on "help and healing." Most of the pregnancy help centers also offer post-abortion counseling.

REFERENCES

¹ For evidence confirming this connection, see Coalition on Abortion/Breast Cancer (www.abortionbreastcancer.com), or Google up ABC link. For health risks more generally, see www.TheUnchoice.com. Recognizing the risks of abortion, the majority of states have now passed some type of Women's Right to Know laws.

² Post-abortion healing ministries are springing up all around the world, and even some pro-choice organizations have set up websites to help women who are hurting after abortion. A number of designed studies have found that women often suffer serious bad psychological consequences as a result of abortion, and a large, 25 yearlong study done by a pro-choice researcher in New Zealand intending to disprove the reality of post-abortion syndrome established its reality instead. A good high quality website for information on the harmful effects of abortion is www.abortionresearch.us

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT ABORTION

?

*Questions
Teenagers
ask...*

★ *Is abortion safe?*

★ *Can abortion affect my future?*

★ *How many abortions does it take before a girl might have trouble having a baby later?*

★ *How does a girl feel when she has an abortion?*

★ *How does a girl feel afterwards?*

WHAT ARE

