

This fact sheet is for those who are experiencing an unplanned pregnancy and want information about abortion.

Abortion is when a pregnancy is terminated (ended).

Am I pregnant?

If you think you are pregnant it is important to have a test to confirm the pregnancy. A pregnancy test can be done with a urine or blood sample. You can buy a urine test from the pharmacy or supermarket and follow the instructions on the packet. The test can also be done at a Family Planning Australia Clinic, GP practice, Women's Health Centre or other health service. The sooner you find out for sure, the more time you have to think about your options. If you decide to have an abortion, it is best to have it as early as possible.

Who can I talk to?

Unplanned pregnancies happen to people of all ages and from all backgrounds. It is estimated that 50% of Australian women have an unplanned pregnancy at some time in their life, and 1 in 4 women will have an abortion. It can be helpful to talk about your options with people who are close to you like your partner, a friend or a family member. You can also talk to a health professional to get more information before you make a decision.

There are three options to consider when you are experiencing an unplanned pregnancy:

- continuing the pregnancy-choosing to parent
- continuing the pregnancy-adoption or foster care
- terminating the pregnancy-abortion

How is an abortion done?

There are two ways that an abortion can be done.

Surgical abortion

Surgical abortion in NSW is done in a clinic by a trained doctor (usually a specialist GP or Gynaecologist). For this procedure, you will be under sedation or a light anaesthetic. You may also need to have an ultrasound and a blood test beforehand.

The surgical abortion is done by applying gentle suction to the inside of the uterus with a small, plastic tube.

Surgical abortion takes about 15 minutes, but you will spend around 4 hours at the clinic. It often helps to have a support person with you. If you are having sedation someone will need to drive you home. It is normal to have some mild cramping and light bleeding after the abortion.

Surgical abortion is safe, simple and low risk when done under 12 weeks of pregnancy. If it has been more than 12 weeks since your last period the abortion procedure may be more complicated. You will need to talk to your doctor more about surgical abortion over 12 weeks.

Medical abortion

If you are having a medical abortion you will experience the abortion at home and should have a support person with you during that time. A medical abortion can be provided by a GP when you are less than 9 weeks pregnant. You will usually need to have an ultrasound and blood test before having a medical abortion.

A medical abortion happens in these stages:

- Medications will be prescribed are mifepristone and misoprostol
- Mifepristone is one tablet that you take with a glass of water
- Misoprostol is taken 36-48 hours after the first medication (Mifepristone)

After taking the misoprostol tablets, you will experience something similar to a miscarriage. You may have heavy bleeding at first which then becomes lighter. Sometimes bleeding can last longer than 2 weeks. Clinical staff will discuss with you what to expect after the medical abortion.

There are risks involved with all medical procedures, including abortion. Your doctor or the staff at the clinic or hospital will discuss these risks with you, and support you to decide on the best option for you.



Abortion: the law

Abortion is legal in all states and territories of Australia under certain circumstances and when done by a registered health professional. Each state and territory has different laws.

Do I need a referral?

You do not usually need a referral from a doctor to get an abortion.

The clinic that you go to will depend on how many weeks pregnant you are. It is important to let the clinic staff know how many weeks pregnant you are when you make your appointment.

How much will it cost?

The cost of an abortion is different for each state and each clinic. If you have a Medicare card, it will cover some of the costs. Medicare does not usually cover the full cost. Ask how much the abortion will cost when you make your appointment.

Contraception

It's important to think about what contraception you are going to use after the abortion. You can usually start using contraception on the day of the abortion. This can help prevent unplanned pregnancy. Talk to your GP about what type of contraception is right for you.

Follow up

You should seek immediate medical help if you have:

- very heavy bleeding
- fever
- pain that isn't improved with simple pain killers
- you can seek help from:
 - the clinic where you had the abortion done
 - your GP
 - hospital emergency department

You will need a check-up 2-3 weeks after a medical abortion.

You might need to have another blood test and ultrasound.

If you have any concerns after having a medical abortion you can call Health Direct 24-hour advice number on 1800 022 222 www.healthdirect.gov.au. In an emergency dial 000.

For more information

- Visit your nearest Family Planning Australia clinic fpnsw.org.au/clinics
- Chat to a nurse via Talkline – 1300 658 886 or fpnsw.org.au/talkline
- National Relay Service (for people who are d/Deaf, hard of hearing or have speech communication difficulties) – 133 677
- Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) – 131 450
- Family Planning NSW client resource on contraception – What suits me? fpnsw.org.au/health-information/contraception/contraception-options
- Family Planning Australia client resource – Pregnant? Working through your options fpnsw.org.au/health-information/individuals/pregnancy-and-fertility/pregnant-working-through-your-options
- Family Planning Australia client factsheet on the law on abortion – fpnsw.org.au/factsheets/individuals/abortion/law-abortion-nsw
- Family Planning Australia client resource on contraception – fpnsw.org.au/healthinformation/contraception/contraception-options
- Children by Choice – www.childrenbychoice.org.au