

FACT SHEET: LEGAL ABORTION HARMS WOMEN

Normal Pregnancies

In a normal pregnancy, Mother Nature tries to keep the pregnant woman and her child tightly bound together, to protect the health of both. Legal abortion seeks to separate the child, (a unique human being) from the mother, either by chemical/hormonal means (the pill), or surgical means. Whether chemical or surgical, the abortion kills the new human being, and may injure the mother as well. Listed below is a brief summary of how abortion may harm the mother.

Maternal Deaths

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that 449 women died from legal abortions during the years 1973-2019 (latest data available). However, the CDC's method of counting such deaths depends on voluntary reports by the states, and not all states report. (In 2019, California, Maryland and New Hampshire did not report and failed to do so for several years.) Moreover, the CDC's coding system is not perfect, and an unknown number of abortion-related deaths may not be identified as such. Thus, Kevin Sherlock, an investigative reporter who examined newspaper articles and public records in county courthouses, coroners' offices and morgues, found there were 30% to 40% more such deaths during 1980-1989 than CDC figures indicated. During 1992-1993, Mark Crutcher found 23 maternal deaths from legal abortion. The CDC listed only two of these.

Immediate Injuries

Operation Rescue is an organization which reports on "botched" abortions—that is, abortions that go wrong in the clinics, and require hospital care that the clinics cannot provide. These events are documented by filming the arriving and departing ambulances as they leave with the abortion patients requiring further care. Often related 911 calls are available which indicate the extent of patient injuries. From 2011 through 2021 (11 years) at least 280 botched abortions of this type have been documented in the U.S. This is only a fraction of the total occurring, since not all clinics are observed, and those observed are not watched all the time.

A special report by Operation Rescue found that from 2011 through May of 2015 (4.4 years), records from the **Ohio Department of Health** reveal that at least **47 abortion-related emergencies** or complications took place at Ohio abortion clinics. This number from just **one** state indicates that the 280 botched abortions recorded from **all** the states over a **longer** period is just scratching the surface of the true number of botched abortions which occur. Furthermore, not all abortion-related complications will manifest themselves while the mother is in the clinic, but only occur hours or days later, so these also are not counted by Operation Rescue.

Longer-term Negative Effects of Abortion

The medical literature has been documenting the negative effects of legal abortion on the woman for over 42 years. In summary form, here are some of the major findings:

- **Pill Abortions:** The Guttmacher Institute reported on 2-24-22 that in 2020, pill abortions (also called medical or chemical abortions) accounted for 54% of U.S. abortions. Four U.S. studies, published from 2010-2021, collectively comparing 32,197 pill abortions with 109,865 surgical abortions, found that pill abortions were from 1.5 to 4 times more dangerous for the woman, and were more likely to require subsequent emergency room visits. Hemorrhage and incomplete abortions were frequent problems.
- **Breast Cancer:** At least 84 world-wide studies indicate abortion (either medical or surgical) is related to an increase in the risk of subsequent breast cancer. The reason for this connection is this: When a woman becomes pregnant, her body begins to send estrogen to her breasts to produce milk cells. This process takes about 32 weeks to complete. If the woman has an abortion or a natural miscarriage before 32 weeks, she has many immature milk cells in her breasts, which are more prone to develop cancer than are mature milk cells. Hence, lifetime risk of breast cancer for American women increased from 1 in 12 in 1970 to 1 in 7 in 2006, which corresponds to the 6.4 fold increase in legal abortions over this time period. There are some 1.7 million

new cases of breast cancer in the U.S. each year. It is the leading cause of death of women between the ages of 20 and 59.

- **Ectopic Pregnancies:** Ectopic pregnancies develop in the Fallopian tubes, rather than the womb. Abortion increases the risk of ectopic pregnancies. If undetected, they may cause maternal deaths. From 1970-1989, such pregnancies increased almost fourfold in the U.S., coinciding with the increase in legal abortions. They accounted for 13% of all pregnancy-related maternal deaths during this period.
- **Aborting an “unwanted” child may contribute to health problems for future wanted children:** At least 139 medical studies find that abortion increases the risk of prematurity and low birth weight in subsequent births, thus posing increased health risks for future, wanted children. Prematurity is the leading cause of death among newborn babies. Moreover, those who survive may face lifelong problems. These include mental retardation, cerebral palsy, breathing and respiratory problems, vision and hearing loss, and feeding and digestive problems. Subsequent miscarriage is also associated with abortion. Although no one can predict the future in individual cases, statistically, giving up your “unwanted” child for adoption may help protect the health of your future wanted children.
- **Suicide:** A 13-year study of the entire female population of Finland aged 15-49 found the suicide rate among women who had abortions was 6 times higher than that of women who had given birth, and twice that of women who had miscarriages. David C. Reardon studied the MediCal records of over 173,000 California women who had given birth or aborted. Women who had state-funded abortions were 2.5 times more likely to die of suicide than those who had given birth. A nationally representative sample of 3,130 U.S. women found that women who had abortions were 51% more likely to have attempted suicide.
- **Mental Health:** A recent (2018) review of over 200 studies regarding the effect of legal abortion on mental health concluded that while the majority of women do not have mental illness following abortion, abortion does contribute to mental problems for some women. Some 15 factors increase the risk of mental health problems after an abortion. These include pressure from others to have an abortion, opposition to abortion from significant others, low self-esteem, ambivalence about the abortion decision, abortion after the first trimester, and having a prior abortion. Indeed, abortion is found to have a “dose effect” on mental health. That is, each abortion adds to the likelihood that the woman will experience mental illness. Specific mental illnesses found to be related to abortion include depression, panic and anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, and drug and alcohol abuse or dependency. Women who abort may also experience a type of post-traumatic stress syndrome characterized by flashbacks to the abortion experience, anxiety attacks on the abortion anniversary, difficulty relating to children, and depression.

Choose Life

While no one can guarantee you a positive outcome (no matter what your choice), there are agencies willing to give you free services if you choose life for the human being you have conceived. We hope and pray that choosing life for your child will benefit not only the child, but you yourself, since in many instances, abortion harms women physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

NOTE: IF YOU’VE TAKEN ONLY THE FIRST OF THE TWO ABORTION PILLS, AND HAVE CHANGED YOUR MIND, CALL (877-558-0333) WITHIN 72 HOURS FOR TREATMENT THAT MAY SAVE YOUR CHILD’S LIFE. For more details and documentation about how abortion harms women, go to rtlofneo.com, click on “Issues,” and then on “Abortion,” and scroll down to a longer paper, “Legal Abortion Harms Women.”

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