

HEALTH MATTERS

Seeking Early Abortion Services

www.arhp.org/healthmatters

If you have a pregnancy that you did not plan, you can choose to have an abortion. Some women choose to take pills that cause the abortion. Other women prefer to have an in-clinic abortion, which is when a clinician removes the pregnancy tissue from a woman's body. An in-clinic abortion is sometimes called a 'suction' or 'aspiration' abortion.

If you decide to have an abortion, you will need to:

1. Make an appointment with a health care provider or a clinic (doctor, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or midwife).
2. Have a way to get to and from the appointment.
3. Know how you will pay for the abortion.

Finding an Abortion Provider

Here are some ways you can find an abortion provider:

- Call the National Abortion Federation hotline at 1-800-772-9100. The hotline gives referrals to abortion providers in the United States. They may also help you find financial assistance.
- Call Planned Parenthood at 1-800-230-PLAN. Planned Parenthood has clinics in every state. Some of the clinics provide abortions.
- National Network of Abortion Funds may be able to help you find a clinic or pay for an abortion. Visit www.nnaf.org/help.html.
- Check Abortion Clinics Online at www.gynpages.com.
- Look up "Abortion Providers" or "Abortion Services" in your phone book.

Early Abortion Options

The chart below compares the options available for early abortion.

	Medical Abortion ("The Abortion Pill")	In-Clinic Abortion with Electric Vacuum Aspiration (EVA) or Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA)
What happens?	<p><i>During your appointment, you swallow the first pill, called mifepristone (also known as 'RU-486').</i></p> <p>Your health professional will give you more pills (called 'misoprostol') to take a few days later at home. You will have heavy bleeding and cramping for a few hours after taking the pills.</p> <p><i>1-2 weeks later, you should see your health care professional for a follow-up visit. Your provider will make sure the abortion is complete.</i></p>	<p>The procedure is performed by a health care provider. Instruments are gently inserted through the vagina into the uterus.</p> <p>EVA: Your provider uses an electric-powered suction device to remove the pregnancy tissue.</p> <p>MVA: Your provider uses a hand held suction device that looks like a syringe to remove the pregnancy tissue.</p> <p>The abortion takes just a few minutes.</p> <p><i>1-3 weeks later, you should see your health care professional for a follow-up visit.</i></p>

	Medical Abortion (“The Abortion Pill”)	In-Clinic Abortion with Electric Vacuum Aspiration (EVA) or Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA)
When can it be done?	This can be done during the first 9 weeks of a pregnancy.	This can be done during at least the first 12 weeks of a pregnancy.
How painful is it?	Everyone’s experience is different. Most women have mild to very strong cramps during the abortion. Pain pills can help.	
How much bleeding is there?	Many women have heavy bleeding with clots after taking the pills at home. Light bleeding or spotting may continue for a few weeks. (After a couple days the bleeding shouldn’t keep you from your normal routine.)	There is usually light to moderate bleeding or spotting for several days.
How effective is it?	Abortion pills are almost always effective. A few women (about 4 in 100) will need to have a vacuum aspiration to complete the abortion.	The aspiration procedure is almost always effective. If it does not work, it will need to be repeated.
How safe is it?	Medication abortions are very safe. Millions of women have used this method for over 25 years.	Vacuum aspiration abortion is a very safe. The risk of complications is low.
What are the advantages?	Some women think it feels more natural than a vacuum aspiration abortion. They compare it to a miscarriage or having a heavy period. The abortion occurs in the privacy of your own home instead of in an office.	The procedure takes place in a medical facility with trained medical staff and it is over in a few minutes. You come in pregnant and leave not pregnant. Manual vacuum aspiration is quieter than electric vacuum aspiration. There is less bleeding than with abortion pills. This method can be used later in pregnancy than a medication abortion.
What are the disadvantages?	In some cases the abortion can take up to 3 days, but usually occurs in a few hours.) Heavy bleeding and severe cramps may last for several weeks. This is longer than with an aspiration abortion. A follow-up visit is required. Cannot be done after 63 days of pregnancy.	You must have the procedure done in a medical office or facility.

After Your Abortion

You are able to become pregnant again a few days after having an abortion. If you don’t want to get pregnant right away, you can ask your health professional for a birth control method to use immediately. Some women have an intrauterine device (IUD) or a vaginal ring placed at the time of the abortion. You may also ask for a shot (Depo-Provera®), which will prevent pregnancy for 3 months.

Exhale is an organization that provides confidential information and support for women who have had an abortion. Visit www.4exhale.org or call **1-866-4 EXHALE** for more information. **Backline** provides support to women during pregnancy and after they have had an abortion. They have information on pregnancy, parenting, abortion, and adoption. Visit www.yourbackline.org or call 888-493-0092. The **Association of Reproductive Health Professionals** has an abortion resource center at www.arhp.org/Abortion.