

In some cases, further treatment (a procedure or dose of medication) may be required. There is also a small chance of damage to the uterus or cervix during a surgical abortion. While still very small, this risk is greater if the procedure is performed after 12 weeks of pregnancy.

## How will I feel afterward?

Following an abortion you may experience emotions ranging from relief, sadness, anger, guilt, doubt, depression, renewed energy, remorse, or "back to normal". There is no right way to feel, but it can help to talk to someone. For additional support, counselling services are available.

## Do I need a follow-up examination?

You should see a doctor 1-2 weeks after an abortion to make sure there are no problems or ongoing pregnancy. Don't rely on a home pregnancy test.

This is also a good time to discuss contraception with your doctor, as you can get pregnant soon after having an abortion.

## What if I'm under 16?

If you are under 16 years of age and still living at home, a parent or legal guardian must be informed that you are considering an abortion. While the parent or guardian must be given the opportunity to participate in the counselling and consultation process between you and the doctor, the final choice is yours. In special circumstances you can apply to the Children's Court for an order to proceed with an abortion without parental involvement.

## Need more info or someone to talk to?

### Sexual and Reproductive Health Western Australia

70 Roe Street, Northbridge WA 6003  
Ph 08 9227 6177 | [info@srhwa.com.au](mailto:info@srhwa.com.au)

### Sexual Health Helpline

Metropolitan callers 08 9227 6178  
Country callers 1800 198 205  
[sexhelp@srhwa.com.au](mailto:sexhelp@srhwa.com.au)

### Counselling

70 Roe Street, Northbridge WA 6003  
Ph 08 9228 3693 | [counselling@srhwa.com.au](mailto:counselling@srhwa.com.au)  
Counselling sessions for unplanned pregnancy and post abortion issues are subsidised by the Department of Health WA.

### Quarry Health Centre for Under 25s

170 Aberdeen Street, Northbridge WA 6003  
Ph 08 9227 1444 | [quarry@quarry.org.au](mailto:quarry@quarry.org.au)  
[quarryhealthcentre.org.au](http://quarryhealthcentre.org.au)

## WA clinics which perform abortions:

### Nanyara Medical Group

08 9277 6070  
[www.nanyaraclinic.com](http://www.nanyaraclinic.com)

### Dr Marie™ (formerly Marie Stopes International)

Freecall 1800 003 707 (24 hours)  
[www.drmarie.org.au](http://www.drmarie.org.au)

[srhwa.com.au](http://srhwa.com.au)



Sexual & Reproductive Health  
Western Australia

# Unplanned Pregnancy Considering Abortion



For some women, decisions around unplanned pregnancy are relatively simple. For others, the decision-making process is more complex. If you are pregnant and don't know what to do, talking to a doctor or counsellor about the choices available may help you decide what is right for you.

It is very important to confirm your pregnancy early on to allow you plenty of time to consider your choices. Don't wait to find out, and seek advice early if you are pregnant.

While SRHWA is a pro-choice organisation, be aware that some organisations offering pregnancy support services have strong beliefs, which you may not share. If you are not getting the advice and support you want, go elsewhere for help.

## What is an abortion?

An abortion is a way of ending, or terminating, a pregnancy. There are two types of abortion available in WA - surgical abortion and medical abortion.

A surgical abortion is a simple procedure using gentle suction to remove the pregnancy tissue from the uterus. It is performed with anaesthetic at a specialised clinic or hospital by a qualified doctor.

A medical abortion is when medication is used to end a pregnancy. It provides an alternative to a surgical abortion for women during the early weeks of pregnancy. Medical abortions are only available at specialised clinics and hospitals. A doctor can provide you with more information.

Abortions can also be performed later in pregnancy, but the procedure is more difficult and the risks increase as the pregnancy advances.

## I've decided to have an abortion... now what?

If you live in WA and decide to have an abortion, you will need to obtain a referral from a doctor who will discuss the risks of continuing pregnancy and risks of an abortion. The doctor will also offer you a referral for counselling before and after an abortion (it is up to you if you want to have counselling).

## Is abortion legal?

Abortions are legal in WA under 20 weeks of pregnancy if a woman has given informed consent and if the procedure is carried out by a qualified doctor.

At 20 weeks of pregnancy and beyond, two medical practitioners from a panel of six appointed by the Minister for Health must agree that the pregnant woman or fetus has a severe medical condition that justifies an abortion.

## How much does it cost?

The cost of an abortion varies between clinics, and some of the cost is covered by Medicare. Contact the clinics listed at the end of this brochure for more information.

Special arrangements can sometimes be made for women with serious financial problems - discuss this with the clinic or the doctor providing you with a referral.

## How long does it take?

The procedure for a surgical abortion only takes a few minutes, but you should allow for a few hours at the clinic. You will have an ultrasound to confirm how many weeks the pregnancy is, and you will need time to recover after the procedure. The procedure may take a bit longer if you are over 12 weeks pregnant.

Medical abortions require a consultation of up to an hour.

## What are the risks involved?

An abortion is considered to be a safe, low-risk procedure, particularly if done in early pregnancy (up to 12 weeks). In later pregnancies the risks from an abortion rise, however they are still low.

There is no evidence to suggest that an abortion has any effect on future fertility or future pregnancies. However, there are a small number of possible, but rare, complications involved with the procedure - the clinic or hospital will discuss these with you in more detail.

There is usually some bleeding and it is quite common to have cramps (like period pain) for a short while afterwards (painkillers can help). Some women feel tired or sick after the procedure so it's advisable to plan to rest afterwards. If you are experiencing excessive bleeding or severe pain, contact the clinic where you had the procedure as soon as possible.

Infection is uncommon, especially if you follow instructions given to you by the clinic or hospital. These may include avoiding tampons, vaginal intercourse and baths for around two weeks after the procedure.

**See our 'Help! I think I'm Pregnant' brochure for more information**