

**Women's Medical Center of Rhode Island 401.467.9111 or 800.877.6339
1725 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905**

Frequently Asked Questions About Abortion

What are the risks with abortion?

Every medical procedure has risks and complications that may happen. With abortion, complications are rare and most are easy to resolve. Did you know that abortion is far safer than childbirth? It is one of the safest outpatient procedures you can have. At our Center, you can talk about abortion and its risks before you have your procedure.

Will I be able to have children later on?

Yes, you will be able to have children in the future. This is true even if you have had more than one abortion. While complications with an abortion procedure can affect your ability to have children, abortion has a very low complication rate. Our Center's serious complication rate is extremely low.

How do I know if I am getting good medical care?

Like with other areas of health care, not all abortion providers are the same. You can get a referral to a provider from a trusted physician, family planning clinic or friend. Be sure to check if the provider is a member of one of the national professional organizations like the Abortion Care Network (www.abortioncarenetwork.org) or the National Abortion Federation (www.prochoice.com). Calling the provider is also helpful. Ask about their licensing – particularly ask if they are licensed by their state or local health department and licensed as an Ambulatory Surgical Center. Also ask if their physicians and anesthesia providers are Board Certified. See how their fees compare to other providers in your area. Notice if the staff sounds knowledgeable and willing to take their time with you. You can even visit the provider to make sure you will feel comfortable seeking services from them. Don't forget to ask if the provider has a web site and go online to see the type of information they provide.

Will I have discomfort during the procedure?

Every woman has a different experience with abortion – some women will feel no discomfort while others may be very uncomfortable during the procedure. At our Center we are able to customize anesthesia options, as well as use other effective pain management techniques like slow breathing and visualization to help you through a procedure. Keep in mind most procedures, from start to finish, are about 5 to 15 minutes in duration. This can vary, though, depending on the woman and the stage in her pregnancy (first or second trimester). Our medical staff will talk with you to determine what anesthesia options are best for you. If you choose to have an oral sedative, intravenous (IV) sedation or general anesthesia, you will need to have someone pick you up. You will not be allowed to drive yourself home. You will also have eating and drinking restrictions starting the night before the procedure.

Can I have my significant other with me during the procedure?

At our Center, we always strive to put you first. Your significant other may be able to participate in your counseling session, but will not be allowed to be with you during the procedure because of state regulations for surgery. Due to the privacy of other women, your

significant other will also not be allowed to be with you in the recovery room. Your significant other is welcome to wait for you in our waiting room, or leave our Center and return to pick you up.

When will I get my next menstrual period?

You will get your next period within 4 to 8 weeks after the procedure. Right after the procedure you may spot or bleed lightly. Bleeding may also stop and start. All of this is normal but the bleeding you have right after an abortion is **NOT** your period. Know that you **CAN** get pregnant right after an abortion, before your next period starts. Always use a method of pregnancy prevention when you have sexual intercourse. At our Center, we will talk with you about contraception options and help you choose a method that will work best for you.

How soon can I have sexual intercourse?

Generally, you can start having sexual intercourse about 3 weeks after your abortion. For some types of procedures, you may need to refrain from sex for a longer time. One of our medical staff will talk with you about this and also help you with choosing a contraceptive method. Always use a method of pregnancy prevention when you have sexual intercourse. You **CAN** get pregnant right after an abortion, before your next period starts.

What will I feel emotionally after the procedure?

Every woman has her own emotions and feelings after the procedure. There is no “right” or “wrong” way to feel. Some women feel very relieved. Other women may feel sadness, loss and anger. It is also normal to feel relieved, sad and angry at the same time. Our Center’s experienced and caring staff is able to talk with you about your emotions both before and after your procedure. You can also go online or call organizations that offer free telephone counseling before and after abortion – Backline at www.yourbackline.org or 888.493.0092; Exhale at www.4exhale.org or 866.439.4253.

Do my parents have to know about my abortion?

No, your parents do not need to know, even though in Rhode Island any woman under age 18 must have the written consent of a parent or legal guardian to obtain an abortion. If you feel you are not able to talk to or get support from a parent or legal guardian, you can get what is called a “judicial bypass” from the Court. This means that you, as a minor, are deemed mature enough by a judge to make your own decision about abortion. Our staff is very knowledgeable in this process and can assist you with getting a judicial bypass.

What is the abortion pill and is it the same thing as the morning after pill?

No, they are not the same thing. The abortion pill, also called Mifeprex, Mifepristone and RU 486, is a prescription drug used to **end** an early pregnancy. This is commonly called medical abortion where you pass the pregnancy at home. We offer medical abortion at our Center and can talk with you to see if this is an option for you.

The morning after pill is used to **prevent** conception (pregnancy) from occurring after you have had unprotected sex. It causes you to shed the lining of your uterus, or bleed, preventing pregnancy from occurring. It should be taken within 120 hours (5 days) after having unprotected sex, but is most effective if taken within 72 hours (3 days). The morning after pill is also called emergency contraception (EC). You can get EC at family planning

clinics or through your health care provider. You can also get EC over-the-counter (without a prescription) at your pharmacy.