

**What is an Abortion?**

Abortion ends a pregnancy. In Canada abortion is safe and legal, and the cost is covered by provincial medical plans. Abortion is very common and many people (approximately 1 in 3) have one or more abortion. Like any medical record, a person’s choice to have an abortion is private and confidential. Parental consent is not required for young people to access abortion. Whether to have an abortion is the choice of the person who is pregnant. It is not OK for someone (even a partner/spouse or parent) to pressure a person into continuing or ending a pregnancy.

**What types of abortion are available?**

There are two kinds of abortion available in BC: aspiration abortion (sometimes called surgical abortion) and medication abortion (sometimes called medical abortion). Both kinds of abortion are very safe, and the rate of complications is less than 1%. Abortion has no effect on future fertility unless there is a very rare complication.

	<b>Aspiration (Surgical) Abortion</b>	<b>Medication (Medical) Abortion</b>
<b>What is it?</b>	It is a procedure done in a clinic/hospital where the health care provider removes the contents of the uterus. In early pregnancy, this is done with aspiration (suction) and usually takes less than 10 minutes. Later in pregnancy, there may be additional steps in the procedure and it can take longer.	It is a process that involves taking medications. The first medication stops the pregnancy and the second medication causes the body to push out the contents of the uterus. The process occurs over a few days.
<b>When is it done?</b>	Typically done in early pregnancy (first trimester), but may be done later in pregnancy (access may be limited based on where you live).	In early pregnancy (first trimester), usually up to 9 weeks.
<b>How many appointments?</b>	Usually one appointment.	Usually two appointments.
<b>What does it cost?</b>	Cost covered by a Care Card (provincial medical coverage in BC). It is about \$500 for those without a Care Card.	Cost covered by a Care Card (provincial medical coverage in BC), although there may be a small fee for pain medications. It is about \$700 for those without a Care Card.
<b>Is there pain or discomfort?</b>	Typically, there is cramping (ranging from mild to strong) for a short time during the procedure and right afterwards. Medications are available to help. Milder cramps may continue for some time afterwards.	Typically, there is cramping (which tends to be stronger than period cramps, and stronger than with an aspiration abortion) for a few hours. Medications are available to help. Milder cramps may continue for some time afterwards.

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<b>How much bleeding is there?</b>	Typically lighter than a period.	Typically heavier than a period.
<b>What are the side effects?</b>	Some people will have dizziness or nausea/vomiting for a short time afterwards. In most cases, you will need someone to drive/accompany you home.	Many people will have flu-like symptoms for up to 24 hours, such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, dizziness, fever or chills.
<b>Do I need to take time off of work/school/etc.?</b>	Yes, the day of the procedure. Most activities can be resumed the following day.	Yes, you may need to take time off for appointments and typically for 2 days when you take the second medication.
<b>Will people know I have had an abortion?</b>	There is no way for someone to know you've had an aspiration abortion unless you choose to tell them.	No, but it may be can be difficult to hide the process (which looks like a miscarriage) from those you are living or staying with.

## What happens after an abortion?

- It is important to follow the instructions given to you by your abortion provider. Some clinics may tell you to schedule a follow-up appointment.
- Fertility returns very quickly after an abortion, so your abortion or regular health care provider can help you to find a birth control method that works for you.
- After an abortion, you may have a variety of feelings, including relief and sadness. There are many services that provide emotional support after an abortion. If you need support you can ask your abortion provider or contact Sex Sense at 1-800-739-7367 or [sexsense.org](http://sexsense.org) for resources

## How can I find abortion services in BC?

What services are available will depend on where you live. You can ask your family doctor, local Options for Sexual Health Clinic, or Sex Sense (see contact info above) for information on abortion services in your area.

Please note that some organizations that offer pregnancy options counselling, information or decision-making support are pregnancy crisis centers, anti-abortion organizations that spread misinformation about abortion and pressure people into continuing pregnancies. It can sometimes be quite difficult to know if an organization is a crisis pregnancy center. For pro-choice, nonjudgmental services that support all pregnancy options, please contact Sex Sense.

### Questions? We're here for you!

We are here to help.

You can visit one of our Options for Sexual Health Clinics to speak with a health care provider. Our Sex Sense Team is available Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. by phone 1-800-739-7367 or by email at [SexSense.org](http://SexSense.org) to answer your questions about birth control, or any other questions about sex, sexuality, or sexual health. This fact sheet contains general information and should not be used in place of individual consultation with a qualified healthcare provider.