

# LET'S TALK ABOUT ABORTION: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Women's Health



What is abortion?



Abortion is the **ending of an existing pregnancy**. When a pregnancy ends naturally, it is called a **spontaneous abortion or a miscarriage**. The term abortion is usually used for an **induced abortion**, which is when a person **takes action to end a pregnancy**. **In this conversation we are talking about induced abortion.**



Is abortion safe?



Abortion is very **safe and common**. The risks of complications associated with abortion are **14 times lower than the risks associated with carrying a pregnancy to term**. In the United States, approximately 18% of pregnancies end in abortion.



Is abortion legal in California?



Yes, **abortion is legal**. In fact, it is a **fundamental right in the State Constitution of California**. Individuals can obtain an abortion in California, **regardless of their age, immigration status, or whether they live inside or outside the state**.



What are the different ways to have an abortion?



**Medication abortion** is a termination of pregnancy **with pills called mifepristone and misoprostol**. These pills are generally taken **outside of the medical office** and allow the abortion to occur gradually. **Aspiration abortion** is a termination of pregnancy when a **health care provider removes the pregnancy from the uterus**. This type of abortion **occurs in a medical clinic**.





What is the difference between emergency contraception and abortion pills (medication abortion)?

**Emergency contraception** is used **after sexual intercourse** to **prevent** a pregnancy from occurring. In contrast, **medication abortion ends an existing pregnancy.**



Does abortion increase risk of breast cancer, or other cancers?

No, research has **found no association** between abortion and any form of cancer.



Does abortion directly affect future fertility or future pregnancies?

No, there is **no evidence** that having an abortion reduces the ability to get pregnant (fertility), increases risk for miscarriage, or harms future pregnancies in any way. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists reviewed evidence and **found no link between abortion and reduced fertility, or between abortion and issues with future pregnancies.**



Has abortion been shown to harm mental health?

No, having a wanted abortion **does not cause harm to mental health.** People can experience feelings such as sadness or grief after an abortion, but most overwhelmingly feel relief. **This is true for abortions that occur at any time during the pregnancy, both immediately after and years down the road.** Some people may also experience feelings of guilt or judgment about abortion due to **family, cultural, or religious expectations.**



How do I get an abortion?

More information about abortion and a comprehensive list of abortion services in Los Angeles County and nationwide can be found at the OWH website:

[AbortionSafeHaven.lacounty.gov](http://AbortionSafeHaven.lacounty.gov)

