

# ABORTION

Find out more about abortion at:  
[brook.org.uk/abortion](https://brook.org.uk/abortion)



Finding out that you're pregnant might be the news that you've been waiting to hear, but sometimes it may be unwanted for many different reasons.

If you decide to have an abortion, you should be treated without judgement, because it's your decision.

## IS IT SAFE?



**Yes.** The earlier the abortion, the safer it is. There are lots of myths about abortion causing mental health problems, breast cancer or making it harder to get pregnant in the future.

**None of this is true.**



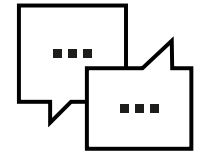
Brook does not provide abortions, but we can refer and support you into other services that do:  
[brook.org.uk/find-a-service](https://brook.org.uk/find-a-service)

## HOW WILL I FEEL?



Everyone will have a different experience, but many say that the main emotion they feel afterwards is relief. If you feel sad or upset, you can talk to a counsellor.

## DO MY PARENTS/ CARERS HAVE TO KNOW?



You can have an abortion without telling your parents, even if you're under 16. You'll be encouraged to tell them, but this is your choice. Some services may ask you to bring a responsible adult with you to the appointment.

Abortion advice and services are confidential. However, if they think you are at risk or in danger, your information may be shared with others (e.g. social services). But, they will talk to you about this first.

## IS IT LEGAL?

**Northern Ireland:** Became legal in 2019. Visit [brook.org.uk/abortion](https://brook.org.uk/abortion) for up to date information



**England, Scotland and Wales:** Legal up to 24 weeks of pregnancy (if two doctors agree)

**Jersey:** Legal up to 12 weeks of pregnancy (if two doctors agree)

## DID YOU KNOW?



**One in three women in the UK will have an abortion during their lifetime.**

(Although many don't talk about it).



# WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

Here are the options if you and your partner have had unprotected sex and think you may be pregnant:



**WITHIN FIVE DAYS**



## EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

This is not the same as having an abortion, but can be used after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy. There are two types:

- IUD: fitted by a doctor or nurse up to five days after
- Emergency contraceptive pill (AKA the morning after pill): available from a range of services up to three to five days after

**REMEMBER:**

If you've have unprotected sex, you need to have an STI test too!

**FROM**



**10-24 WEEKS**

## MEDICAL ABORTION

The same medications used before nine weeks are given, but in larger doses. You may have to return to the clinic one to three days later to take the second pill. After this, the process takes on average 6 hours, but could take over 24 hours.

**KEY**

- Offered pain relief
- Go home the same day
- Possible overnight hospital stay
- Possible cramps and bleeding afterwards

**AFTER**

**24 WEEKS**

Except in rare cases, it is illegal to have an abortion after 24 weeks, so you will need to continue with the pregnancy and consider keeping the baby or seeking adoption. Book an appointment with your GP or local midwifery service for advice on staying healthy during pregnancy: [brook.org.uk/having-a-baby](https://www.brook.org.uk/having-a-baby)

WEEKS



**UP TO NINE WEEKS**



## EARLY MEDICAL ABORTION

Two medicines will be given; the first is oral which ends the pregnancy, the second is inserted in to your vagina, which helps to remove the pregnancy. The process takes four to six hours. You may be given the medicines together or asked to return to the clinic for the second one to three days later.

**UP TO 15 WEEKS**



## VACUUM OR SUCTION METHOD

Either a general (asleep) or local (awake) anaesthetic will be given. The cervix (womb entrance) is gently stretched and a thin tube is passed through it. The pregnancy is then removed by suction. It takes around 5 to 10 minutes.

**FROM 15-24 WEEKS**



## SURGICAL DILATION & EVACUATION

This is a minor operation done under general (asleep) anaesthetic. Special instruments (forceps) are passed up into the womb to remove the pregnancy. It takes around 10-20 minutes, although you may be required to attend clinic the day before.