

# Abortion





A person has three legal options when they are pregnant:

1. Terminate the pregnancy with an **abortion**.
2. Continue with the pregnancy and **parent**.
3. Continue with the pregnancy and place for **adoption**.

The choice belongs to the person who is pregnant and no one else.

### **This booklet is about abortion.**

The Sexual Health Options, Resource and Education (SHORE) Centre is **Pro-Choice**.

This means we respect a person's right to make the best decision for themselves. We will give you up-to-date, accurate and evidence informed information and resources about all your pregnancy options, and allow you to choose what is right for you.

We will support you in every way we can without judgement.

**If you have questions about abortion, or would like support in booking an abortion, please contact:**

**SHORE Centre at 519-743-9360.**

## Things to Think About?

- What are your feelings about abortion in general?
- Are there circumstances when you think abortion is okay?
- Are there circumstances when you think abortion is not okay?
- At what gestational stage, if any, would you be against an abortion?
- Should abortions be more or less restricted in Canada?
- How would you feel if abortion became illegal?
- How, if at all, would you be affected if abortion became illegal?
- How, if at all, do you think it would affect others if abortion became illegal?
- How do you feel about a person having an abortion who never used birth control?
- How do you feel about a person who has had more than one abortion and is not interested in using birth control?
- What are your feelings about birth control?
- What are your feelings about condoms?
- How do you feel about a person having more than one abortion?
- How do you feel about the statement, "abortion is murder"?
- How do you feel about a teenager having an abortion and not telling their parents?
- What are your feelings about a teenager who wants to parent?
- How do you feel about a married person or a person in a long term committed relationship having an abortion?
- How do you feel about a person having an abortion without telling the other person involved?

- How do you feel about a person having an abortion when someone else would like to raise the child?
- What do you think of the saying, "Adoption not Abortion"?
- Do you think adoption is a more noble choice than abortion?
- Do you think adoption would be a hard choice?
- How much do you know about abortion?
- How much do you know about adoption?
- Would you want to adopt a child?
- How much do you know about pregnancy and childbirth?
- How much do you know about parenting?
- How do you feel about a person who is not financially stable being a parent?
- How do you feel about a person who is financially stable having an abortion?
- How do you feel about a person who does not want to be a parent?
- What are your feelings about parenthood?
- Do you want to be a parent?
- Do you know how much it costs to raise a child?
- What are your feelings about abstinence?
- What are your feelings about sex outside of marriage?
- What are your feelings about teenagers having sex?
- When do you think it is appropriate for a person to have sex?



## Are You Ready to be a Parent?

- What do you want out of life?
- What things do you consider important in life?
- How would a child affect your own growth and development?
- Would a child change your educational plans?
- Would a child change your job or career plans?
- Could you handle a child and school?
- Could you handle a child and a job?
- Who would take care of your child if you were at work or school?
- Are you ready and willing to give up the freedom to do what you want to do, when you want to do it?
- Would you miss your free time?
- Would you miss your privacy?
- Can you afford to raise a child?
- Do you know how to make a budget?
- Do you know how much it costs to raise a child?
- Are you prepared to take on the day to day responsibilities of raising a child such as laundry, cleaning, cooking etc.?
- Are you prepared to have another person be completely dependent upon you?
- Are you prepared to be tired?
- Are you prepared to put someone else before yourself?

## **Would You Enjoy being a Parent?**

- Do you like children?
- Have you ever been around a child for an extended period of time?
- Have you ever been alone with a child?
- When you are around children how do you feel?
- How would you feel about having a child around all the time?
- Are you patient enough to deal with the 24 hour responsibility of parenting?
- What do you do when you are angry or upset?
- What does discipline mean to you?

## **What do You Expect from a Child?**

- Do you expect a child to make your life happy?
- Do you expect a child to give your life meaning?
- Do you expect a child to give you someone to love?
- Do you expect a child to love you?
- What gender of child would you like?
- What if you don't get the gender you want?
- Will you expect your child to be like you? What if they're not?
- Will you try to pass on your ideas and values to your child?

## Ways to Help Prevent Abortion

### **Provide people with Comprehensive Sex Education.**

It has been shown over and over again in research that a lack of sex education and/or abstinence only sex education, does not prevent young people from having sex. It does however, prevent them from having safer and more responsible sex, and using birth control and condoms properly. If individuals do not know how their own bodies function, the ins and outs of reproduction or how to prevent pregnancy, how can they make responsible choices?

Individuals also receive misinformation from teachers, parents, peers, the Internet and the media. Many teachers and parents are uncomfortable talking to children and youth about sexual health issues, often because they do not know the answers themselves. Therefore teachers and parents should also be provided with the knowledge and tools to teach their students and children. Because the media is overridden with sexuality advice, ideas and advertisements, people with the facts are better able to decide for themselves what information is accurate and what information is not. The education of teachers, parents and young people results in fewer unintended pregnancies and fewer abortions.

### **Make birth control more easily available.**

Although many people think birth control is readily available, this is not true for all people. Many obstacles exist for people when attempting to access birth control. Some of these obstacles include, the knowledge of where and how to access birth control, the cost of birth control, time and transportation to get birth control and keeping birth control use private (e.g. from parents or partner).



Although condoms are free in various locations, this may not be known, they may be hard to access, one partner may refuse to wear one or they may not be the best type of birth control for the person. Having birth control readily available free of charge, or at a discounted cost, would increase use. This goes hand in hand with education teaching people how to use and talk about the use of birth control. Less birth control use leads to more unintended pregnancies which leads to more abortions.

### **Get everyone involved.**

In order for a pregnancy to occur there must be an egg, a sperm and a uterus. More than one person is involved in this process. There needs to be more programming and emphasis placed on education for every person involved, not just the person carrying the pregnancy.

### **Improvement of Birth Control Methods.**

Vasectomies and tubal ligation offer effective protection against unintended pregnancy (they are still not 100% effective), but these methods are permanent and many people want or need temporary methods of birth control. Among the temporary methods of birth control such as the pill, the patch, the ring, the IUD, the IUS, the condom, the diaphragm, the sponge and spermicides – none are 100% effective, even with perfect use, and some are far from 100% effective. Many are considered inconvenient and many have undesirable side effects.

People want temporary methods of birth control which are safe, effective and easy to use and without side effects. This would increase birth control use. We must continue to research methods which could be all these things. However funding and government support is needed to do so.

## **Increase Self-Esteem.**

Comprehensive sex education and birth control knowledge may be useless if a person does not have the self-esteem to use them. Our environments play a role in this. Education, housing, child care, quality of housing, understanding, stigma and acceptance, are all factors which affect how people feel about themselves and their ability to cope with the pressures of life. For many people sexual expression is often the only way to feel loved which may result in an unintended pregnancy.

Young people with high levels of self-esteem are less likely to compromise their plans for the future with an unintended pregnancy. Accepting people and providing them with a better understanding of human sexual development, a better education and life opportunities will aid in decreasing unintended pregnancies which will lead to less abortions.

**Making abortions illegal does not prevent abortions.  
It does however make abortions less safe.**

## **Facts about Abortion**

- In Canada there are no laws surrounding abortion.
- The Canadian Medical Association regulates abortion.
- The Supreme Court of Canada decriminalized abortion in 1988.
- People of all racial, socioeconomic, cultural and religious backgrounds have abortions.
- People of various ages and abilities have abortions.
- Legally the person who is pregnant must make the decision to have an abortion.

- In Canada you can have an abortion up to 24 weeks of pregnancy.
- In the United States you can have an abortion past 24 weeks of pregnancy – these are extremely rare.
- In Waterloo Region you can have an abortion up to 13 weeks of pregnancy.
- The majority of abortions occur in the first trimester of pregnancy (under 12 weeks).
- In many countries in the world abortion is illegal.
- In Canada abortions are performed in hospitals and in abortion clinics.
- In Ontario, abortions are free of cost if you have an OHIP card. You must show your health card in order for the abortion to be covered by OHIP, otherwise you must pay.
- In Kitchener abortions are performed at Grand River Hospital.
- You do not need a referral from a physician to get an abortion, you can self-refer, your physician does not need to know.
- You do not need permission from your parents to get an abortion and your parents do not need to know.
- You must know the first day of your last menstrual period (LMP) in order to book an in-clinic abortion. If you do not know your LMP you must have an ultrasound. It is a good idea to keep track of your periods.
- Under proper medical conditions, abortion is a very safe procedure.
- The earlier in your pregnancy the abortion is performed, the safer it is.
- 97% of people who have a first trimester abortion have no complications or any post-abortion complaints.
- 2.5% of people who have abortions have minor complications.

- Less than 0.5% of people who have abortions experience serious complications requiring follow-up treatment.
- A first trimester abortion procedure takes less than 10 minutes.
- An abortion pill has been approved in Canada, it is available at some clinics and hospitals. It is available in Waterloo Region.
- There is a method called medication abortion which involves medication to induce a miscarriage in pregnancies 7 weeks and under, which is available at some clinics and hospitals.
- The emotional response after an abortion is different for each individual because the circumstances of each individual considering an abortion are different.
- Post Abortion Stress Syndrome (PASS) is not recognized by the American Medical Association or the Canadian Medical Association.
- Studies have shown no association between breast cancer and abortion.
- SHORE Centre does not perform abortions, however we can provide you with the information and referrals you need to have an in-clinic abortion.
- SHORE Centre has a physician working out of our office who prescribes the abortion pill.

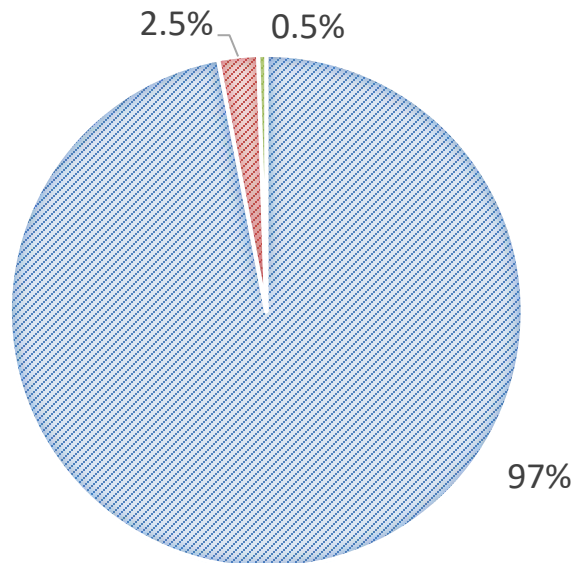
## **Barriers to Accessing Abortion in Canada**

- Not enough abortion providers
- Unexpected costs (childcare, elderly care, lost wages)
- Travel time & expenses (abortions may not be provided in your city or community)

- Transportation issues (abortions may not be provided in your city or community)
- Reciprocal billing issues (if you are out of Province you may have to pay out of pocket)
- Unknowledgeable Health Care Providers and Professionals
- Judgmental Health Care Providers and Professionals
- Uncomfortable Health Care Providers and Professionals
- Wait times at clinics and hospitals (you may be over the gestational limit by the time you can get an appointment as gestational cut offs vary clinic to clinic and hospital to hospital)
- Hospital regulations
- Pre-existing medical conditions such as epilepsy or bleeding disorders (may not have a choice but to have the procedure at a hospital with emergency services)
- Lack of Family Physician or medical support
- Conscience Claus (physicians can opt out of providing service due to their belief and value system)
- Bad referrals
- Difficulty in reaching abortion providers by phone (voicemail)
- Anti-choice or Pro-Life organizations (crisis pregnancy centers)
- Language barriers
- Lack of proper Health Care insurance (e.g. OHIP) and therefore must pay for the procedure
- May be new to Canada and lack insurance, knowledge, Health Care Provider, language etc.
- Abusive relationships
- Private clinic fees
- Lack of sexual health education and resources
- Inaccurate information
- Lack of support or stigma

## SAFETY OF ABORTIONS

■ No Complications   ■ Minor Complications   ■ Serious Complications



Source: [prochoice.org](http://prochoice.org)

## Responses to Common Misunderstandings

### **Pro-choice people are pro-abortion.**

No, people are not pro-abortion. If someone is pro-choice it means that they think the decision to have an abortion is personal and private and they do not think a person should be forced to have an abortion or bear a child. People who are pro-choice would also be against forcing a person to place their child for adoption.

### **There should be no need for abortions when birth control is readily available.**

This statement ignores the fact that all birth control – even properly used, effective birth control – occasionally fails. Furthermore, birth

control methods are still not easily available to all who need them, especially the underemployed, the young and people in isolated rural areas. Comprehensive sex education about effective birth control methods is lacking in many schools, communities and homes; and ignorance, embarrassment or restrictive religious teachings lead many people to rely on ineffective methods or no methods at all.

### **Abortion is dangerous to your health.**

Abortion is an extremely safe procedure, safer than childbirth. People who have legal abortions are just as likely to have a healthy baby in the future as other people are. Approximately 2% of people who have an abortion before 13 weeks have complications and these complications are usually minor and easily treatable. However, abortion is still difficult to obtain in many parts of Canada, and delays in accessing abortion can increase the risk to a person's health.

### **What about people who have more than one abortion.**

It is never irresponsible for a person to end a pregnancy when they are physically, emotionally, financially or socially unable to bear or care for a child. It is unfair to label a person who has had more than one abortion irresponsible or careless. Some people for health reasons can't use the most effective methods of birth control, some people have partners that won't allow the use of birth control and some people get pregnant because their birth control failed. And if a person is "irresponsible" or "careless" should we force them to become a parent?

### **What about adoption.**

People who do not think they can properly care for their child have the option of carrying their baby to term and then placing for adoption. This is usually not an easy decision for people to make or

to carry out and a person should not have to go through pregnancy and childbirth if they do not choose to. Pregnancy and labour can be extremely hard on a person's body and emotional state.

### **People have abortions for convenience or frivolous reasons.**

Many people choose abortion because they take parenthood seriously. They realize how important a wanted child is, and how important the spacing and the number of children can be to the well-being of their family. They take building a healthy and happy family seriously. They also may realize that abortion gives a person the opportunity to have a child later, when they may be able to better welcome and provide for it.

### **They had their fun. Let them pay for it.**

This vindictive phrase, equating parenthood with punishment for sexual activity, could only be made by someone who does not value children or parenthood. As for paying for it, often when people who are not financially stable give birth, the financial cost is paid by society.

### **Should taxpayers have to pay for abortions?**

Yes. Government supported medical care was established to reduce financial inequality and to ensure that all Canadians receive universal health care. If people had to pay for abortions, only those who could not afford them would be forced to bear unwanted children. By funding abortion services we are ensuring that all people are receiving good quality health services. Planned families with healthy children are vital to a healthy Canada.



## **Should a person be able to get an abortion without their partner's consent?**

Yes. The Supreme Court has ruled that the abortion decision is between the person who is pregnant and their health care provider. The person who is carrying the pregnancy is putting their health at risk. If the person has a healthy, supportive relationship they will hopefully involve their partner in the decision, unfortunately, all too often it is the person carrying the pregnancy who must take sole responsibility for raising a child.



**1.888.642.2725**

24-hour Canada wide toll free number that provides information on reproductive and sexual health and referrals on pregnancy options.

## Resources

**Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights**

[sexualhealthandrights.ca](http://sexualhealthandrights.ca)

**Sexual Health Options Resources and Education (SHORE) Centre**

[shorecentre.ca](http://shorecentre.ca)

**Planned Parenthood Federation of America**

[plannedparenthood.org](http://plannedparenthood.org)

**National Abortion Federation (NAF)**

[prochoice.org](http://prochoice.org)

**The Pro-Choice Action Network**

[prochoiceactionnetwork-canada.org/index.shtml](http://prochoiceactionnetwork-canada.org/index.shtml)

**Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada**

[arcc-cdac.ca](http://arcc-cdac.ca)

**Medical Students for Choice**

[ms4c.org](http://ms4c.org)

**The Morgentaler Clinic**

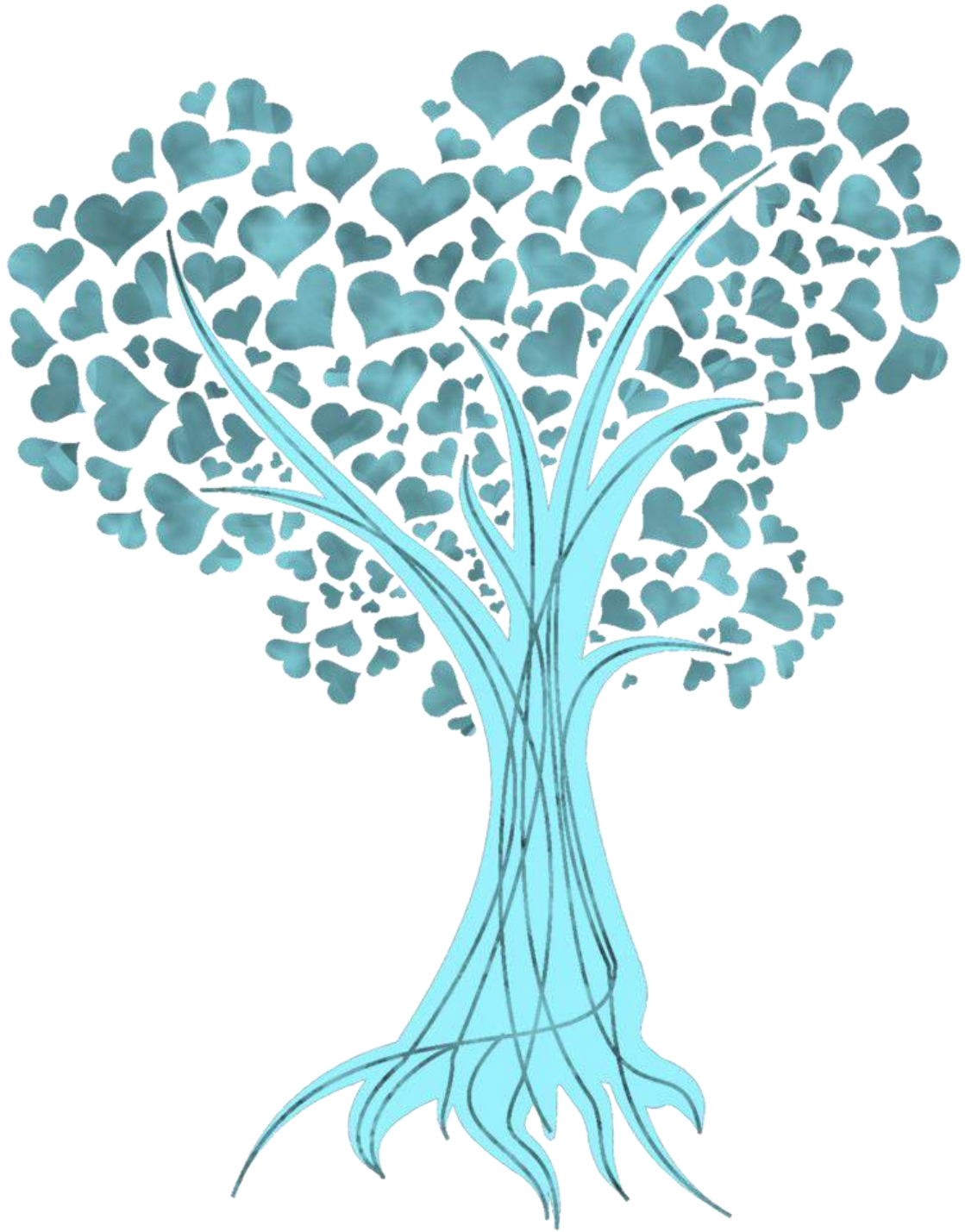
[morgentaler.ca](http://morgentaler.ca)

**Association of Reproductive Health Professionals**

[arhp.org](http://arhp.org)

**“It’s not Voldemort, you can say it,  
abortion.”**

Jason Biggs, Orange is the New Black



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