

## Who we are the Centre for Sexuality

**We teach** individuals how to achieve healthy relationships by learning the skills of decision-making, communication, and consent.

**We train** professionals, so they have the comfort and skills to integrate sexual health into their practice.

**We advocate** to ensure policies that support healthy sexuality across the lifespan are integrated into organizations and adopted by governments.

## Contact Us

700 - 1509 Centre St SW  
Calgary, AB T2G 2E6  
LRT: Victoria Park/Stampede  
BUS: 6, 7, 10

Phone: 403-283-5580  
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Website: [www.centreforsexuality.ca](http://www.centreforsexuality.ca)

# Pregnant and Undecided

A resource for people who want to know their options

Centre  
for Sexuality



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## Resources

### Sexually Transmitted Infections/HIV/AIDS

#### STI Clinic

Sheldon M. Chumir Health Clinic  
5th Floor, 1213 - 4 Street S.W.  
Calgary, AB  
Ph: 403-955-6700

### Women's Shelters

#### Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter

Ph: 403-234-7233 - 24 hour family violence helpline  
[www.calgarywomenstheylter.com](http://www.calgarywomenstheylter.com)

#### YWCA Sheriff King Home

2003 - 16 Street SE  
Calgary, AB  
Ph: 403-266-0707 Crisis Line  
Ph: 403-266-4111  
email: [skreception@ywcaofcalgary.com](mailto:skreception@ywcaofcalgary.com)  
<http://community.ywcaofcalgary.com/page.aspx?pid=330>

#### Awo Taan Healing Lodge

Ph: 403-531-1972 or 403-531-1976 Crisis Lines  
Ph: (403) 531-1970, ext. 200 Main office  
[www.awotaan.org](http://www.awotaan.org)

#### Children's Cottage (24 hour crisis nursery)

Ph: 403-233-2273  
[www.childrencottage.ab.ca](http://www.childrencottage.ab.ca)  
Crisis nursery, respite care, in-home family support

## Resources

### Pregnancy

#### Families Matter

See parenting section

#### Louise Dean Centre

120 - 23 St. NW

Calgary, AB T2N 2P1

Ph: 403-777-7630

<http://schools.cbe.ab.ca/b418/default.htm>

School for pregnant teens

### Pregnancy Counselling and Pregnancy Tests

#### Centre for Sexuality

700 - 1509 Centre St SW

Calgary, AB T2G 2E6

Ph: 403-283-5580

[www.centreforsexuality.ca](http://www.centreforsexuality.ca)

Provides short term post abortion support and referrals for long term counselling

#### Alberta Health Services

##### Sexual and Reproductive Health Clinics

• See contact information in Birth Control Section

Pregnancy tests are also available at pharmacies, your doctor's office and at walk-in clinics.

### Sexual Assault

#### Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse (CCASA)

Ph: 403- 237-5888 -24 hour crisis line

Ph: 403-237-6905 - Office

[www.calgarycasa.com](http://www.calgarycasa.com)

## Finding Out If You Are Pregnant

This booklet is for the many people who become pregnant and find it difficult to make a decision about what to do. This booklet does not encourage you to make any particular decision. It offers ideas that have been helpful to other people in the process of making a decision that is right for them. Each person reading this is facing their own special situation. Yet we have found that each person also has some things in common with others who are facing the same decision. We hope you will use these ideas to help you become clear about your own thoughts and feelings.

If you think that you may be pregnant, there are some of the signs of pregnancy that you may experience. Remember these symptoms may vary: some people may not experience any of these signs, some people may experience all of them and other people may only experience some of the following symptoms.

**Missing a period** - A missed period is usually the first sign of pregnancy, but some people continue to have light periods even when they are pregnant. If your period is late or if you have only light spotting at the time your period is due, continue using birth control, and take a pregnancy test.

**Nausea** - Some people who are pregnant feel nauseated in the morning, but so-called "morning sickness" can happen at any time of the day. Some people have no nausea at all.

**Bladder Pressure/Frequent Urination** - As the size of the uterus increases it puts pressure on the bladder, which makes you pee more often.

**Fatigue, Dizziness or Sleepiness** - You may feel more tired than usual.

**Breast tenderness** - Breasts may get bigger and feel sore or tender. Some people feel a “tingling” sensation or a feeling of tightness in the breasts. Nipples may become very sensitive. You may begin to notice this as soon as two weeks after conception.

**Breast enlargement** - Breasts may grow larger with pregnancy and there is often a darkening and enlargement of the areolae (the darker area around the nipple).

**Secretions from the nipples** - Colostrum, a sticky, yellowish, watery fluid formed by the breasts before actual milk is produced, may begin to appear as early as the 11th week of pregnancy.

**If you think you might be pregnant, it is a good idea to have a pregnancy test, whether or not you wish to continue the pregnancy.**

### How to Get a Pregnancy Test

You can take a urine test about 3-5 days after a missed period. To get the most accurate results, use the pregnancy test the first time you pee in the morning. There is also a blood test available from a doctor that can detect pregnancy as early as 10 to 14 days after conception.

If your pregnancy test result is negative, wait a week and repeat the test. The test could show a negative result if you are too early in the pregnancy or the urine was not concentrated or strong enough.

You can buy home pregnancy tests at any drug store and most grocery stores. They are also available free at the Centre for Sexuality, Sexual and Reproductive Health Clinics, walk-in clinics, or your family doctor. If you have difficulties interpreting the results of a home pregnancy test call any of the above services or check the Resource Section of this booklet for more information.

## Resources

### Pregnancy

#### Breast-feeding

**Lakeview Breastfeeding Clinic**  
Richmond Square Medical Centre  
70, 3915 - 51 Street S.W.  
Calgary, AB T3E 6N1  
Ph: 403-246-7076  
[www.nursingbabywell.com](http://www.nursingbabywell.com)

#### La Leche League

Ph: 403-242-0277  
[www.lllc.ca](http://www.lllc.ca)  
Various support groups in Calgary

#### Midwifery

**Briar Hill Midwives**  
9 Arbour Lake Dr. NW  
Calgary, AB T3G 5G8  
Ph: 403-474-8260

#### Pre-natal and Post-natal Classes

##### Alberta Health Services

##### Prenatal Division

4715 - 8 Ave. SE  
Calgary, AB  
Ph: 403-955-1450  
[www.birthandbabies.com](http://www.birthandbabies.com)  
Offers over thirty different classes for pregnancy, childbirth and parenting

#### Best Beginning

4715 - 8 Ave. SE  
Calgary, AB  
Ph: 403-228-8221  
• Offers services to pregnant teens and people on a low income  
• Prenatal support program

## Resources

### Parenting

#### **Families Matter**

325, 2116 - 27 Ave. NE  
Calgary, AB T2E 7A6  
Ph: 403-205-5178  
[www.familiesmatter.ca](http://www.familiesmatter.ca)

#### **Women in Need**

#1 3525 26 Ave SE  
Calgary, AB T2B 2M9  
Ph: 403-255-5102  
[www.womeninneed.net](http://www.womeninneed.net)  
Free goods and referral program  
Family Resource Centre

### Post-Abortion Counselling

#### **Centre for Sexuality**

700 - 1509 Centre St SW  
Calgary, AB T2G 2E6  
Ph: 403-283-5580  
[www.centreforsexuality.ca](http://www.centreforsexuality.ca)  
Provides short term post abortion support and referrals for  
long term counselling

### Pregnancy

#### **Breast-feeding**

#### **Breastfeeding Centre**

Briar Hill Birth Centre  
1616 - 20A St. NW  
Calgary, AB T2N 2L5  
Ph: 403-220-9101

## Options

### Deciding What to Do

A person that is pregnant have three options they can choose from:

- They can continue the pregnancy and choose to parent
- They can continue the pregnancy and make an adoption plan
- They can end the pregnancy

Deciding which option is best for you may be difficult and stressful. If you need support or if you would like to talk about your options, help is available from sexual health agencies and counselling services. Please see the Resource Section of this booklet.

Whether or not you seek support at this time, remember that you are the only person who can make the final decision about what to do, and your decision must be voluntary. No one have the right to try to pressure or force you into parenthood, adoption or abortion against your wishes.

As well as being stressful, deciding what to do may require careful thought and consideration. The following questions are intended to help you think about some of the issues you might want to consider when making your decision. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Your answers are right for you - and may help you in deciding whether you want to become a parent, make an adoption plan or end the pregnancy.

1. How do you feel about becoming pregnant at this point in your life?
2. What feelings have you had about parenting, adoption and abortion? Have those feelings changed now that you are pregnant?

3. What are your current and future plans? How would they be affected by each of these options?
4. What is your financial situation? How would it be affected by each of the three options?
5. What are your educational and career goals? How would they be affected by each of the three options?
6. Do you have any religious or moral beliefs that affect your decision making?
7. Do you feel like you want or need to tell someone that you are pregnant? What would be the advantages or disadvantages of sharing this information?
8. If you have a partner, how does a pregnancy impact your relationship? How supportive would your partner be of your decision?
9. What role would the support or opinions of family and friends play in your decision making process?
10. Imagine yourself a year from now, first as a parent, then after making an adoption plan, and finally after having had an abortion. What do you think would be the pros and cons of your life in each of those three situations?
11. How much information do you have about each of the three pregnancy options? What information would you need to make a decision?
12. Do you know about resources that are available to you in the community, such as financial, legal and counselling support?

## Resources

### Legal Assistance

#### **Calgary Legal Guidance**

100, 840 - 7th Ave. SW  
Calgary, AB T2P 3G2  
Ph: 403-234-9266  
[www.clg.ab.ca](http://www.clg.ab.ca)

#### **Dial-a-Law**

Ph: 403-234-9022

#### **Lawyer Referral Society**

Ph: 403-228-1722

#### **Maintenance Enforcement**

10365 97 Street NW  
Edmonton, AB T5J 3W7  
Ph: 780-422-5554 in Edmonton  
Will arrange for collection of court-ordered maintenance agreements including child support and spousal support.  
[http://justice.alberta.ca/programs\\_services/mep](http://justice.alberta.ca/programs_services/mep)

#### **The Women's Centre**

##### **Women's Legal Advice Clinic**

646 - 1Ave. NE  
Calgary, AB T2E 0B6  
Ph: 403-264-1155  
[www.peoplescentrecalgary.org](http://www.peoplescentrecalgary.org)

## Resources

### Counselling

#### **Distress Centre**

300, 1010 - 8th Ave. SW  
Calgary, AB T2P 1J2  
Ph: 403-266-HELP (4357)  
[www.distresscentre.com](http://www.distresscentre.com)

#### **Eastside Family Centre**

Northgate Village Mall  
255, 495 - 36 St. NE  
Calgary, AB  
Ph: 403-299-9696  
[www.woodshomes.ca/eastside-family-centre.htm](http://www.woodshomes.ca/eastside-family-centre.htm)  
Walk in counselling at no cost

#### **Jewish Family Services**

420, 5920 - 1A Street S.W.  
Calgary, AB  
Ph: 403-287-3510  
[www.jfsc.org](http://www.jfsc.org)

### Family Physicians

The following have listings of doctors in the Calgary area who are accepting new patients.

#### **College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta**

Ph: 1-800-561-3899  
Can help in finding doctors taking new patients throughout the province.  
[www.cpsa.ab.ca](http://www.cpsa.ab.ca)

## The Parenting Choice

Parenting can be a positive choice for anyone who feels prepared to take on this role. It is important to consider that the choice of parenting will affect every aspect of your life, from your present social and economic lifestyle to your future goals.

You may find it helpful to ask yourself some questions about parenting and your ability to be a parent at this time in your life. The following self-questionnaire brings up some of the many issues involved in parenting. There are no right or wrong answers - the questions are meant to help you make a decision that will be **right for you**.

- How did I feel about parenting before I became pregnant?
- Have those views changed now that I am pregnant?
- What do I want out of life for myself? How will parenting affect my own growth, development and goals?
- Am I financially able to raise a child at this time?
- If / when I envisioned being a parent, what did that vision look like?
- How close to that vision am I at this time? How close to that parenting ideal do I have to be to choose to parent?
- Do I feel like I am ready to parent at this time?
- What sort of support do I feel I need to parent successfully? Does that support exist in my life right now?
- What would make this the best choice for me?

If you wish to continue the pregnancy it is a good idea to get medical, nutritional and emotional support as soon as you can. This is important both for your own health and the health of the fetus. If parenting is an option for you and you would like more support in this area, please refer to the Resource Section of this booklet or call the Calgary Sexual Health Centre for information, support and referrals.

## The Adoption Choice

Adoption can be a good choice for you if you do not wish to terminate a pregnancy but are not yet ready to raise a child. Making an adoption plan can be done at any time before or after the birth of your child. Although you may make an adoption plan prior to the child's birth, legal documents cannot be signed until after the child's birth.

Since it may be a difficult decision emotionally you may wish to seek counselling for yourself, the other birth parent (if they are involved) and your family. Private adoption agencies offer counselling before and after the birth.

- The following questions may help you explore some of your values and feelings about adoption.
- What were my views on adoption before I became pregnant?
- Have these views changed since finding out about the pregnancy?
- How would I feel about continuing the pregnancy and giving birth, but not raising the child?
- Do I need to postpone being a parent myself until later in my life when I am prepared to parent?
- Could I help the child to have potential parents who are ready to be parents and can love and care for the child throughout their life?
- Do I have the support I need to continue the pregnancy and make an adoption plan? What kind of support do I need to make an adoption plan?
- How would carrying the pregnancy to term impact my life?
- How would making this choice impact my life in the long term?
- What would make this the best choice for me?
- What type of adoption would work the best for me?

## Resources

### **Okotoks Sexual Health/Teen Clinic**

11 Cimarron Common,  
Okotoks, AB T1S 2E9  
Ph: 403- 995-2670

### **Counselling**

#### **Access Mental Health**

Calgary, AB  
Ph: 403-943-1500

#### **Calgary Counselling Centre**

200, 940 - 6 Ave. SW  
Calgary, AB T2P 3P1  
Ph: 403-691-5991  
Ph:403-265-4980  
[www.calgarycounselling.com](http://www.calgarycounselling.com)

#### **Calgary Family Services**

1000 8 Ave SW  
Calgary, AB T2P 3M7  
Ph: 403-269-9888  
[www.calgaryfamily.org](http://www.calgaryfamily.org)

#### **Calgary Women's Health Collective**

316, 223 - 12 Ave. SW  
Calgary, AB T2R 0G9  
Ph: 403-265-9590  
[www.calgarywhc.com](http://www.calgarywhc.com)

#### **Catholic Family Services**

250, 707 - 10 Ave. SW  
Calgary, AB T2R 0B3  
Ph: 403-233-2360  
[www.cfs-ab.org/home](http://www.cfs-ab.org/home)



## Resources

### **Christian Adoption Services**

201B - 9705 Horton Road SW  
Calgary, AB T2V 2X5  
Ph: 403-256-3224  
[www.christianadoption.ab.ca](http://www.christianadoption.ab.ca)

### **Birth Control**

#### **Centre for Sexuality**

700 - 1509 Centre St SW  
Calgary, AB T2G 2E6  
Ph: 403-283-5580

[www.centreforsexuality.ca](http://www.centreforsexuality.ca)

Provides non-judgmental information, education and referrals for people deciding which birth control method is right for them. All services are free and confidential.

### **Alberta Health Services**

Sexual and Reproductive Health Clinics (5 locations - listed below)

Offers accessible sexual and reproductive health services. Phone or visit the website for more information.

#### **Sheldon M. Chumir Health Centre**

5th Floor, 1213 - 4 Street S.W.  
Calgary, AB T2R 0X7  
Ph: 403-955-6500

#### **Sunridge Clinic**

406, 2675 - 36 St. NE  
Calgary, AB T1Y 6L4  
Ph: 403-944-7666

#### **East Clinic**

4715 - 8 Avenue SE  
Calgary, AB T2A 3N4  
Ph: 403-955-1431

#### **South Clinic**

31 Sunpark Plaza SE  
Calgary, AB T2X 1N4  
Ph: 403-943-9510  
Ph: 403-943-9510

## The Adoption Choice

Think about your answers and what they mean to you. You may want to discuss your answers with a family member, your partner, a friend or a counsellor.

The following are the adoption choices available in Alberta for you to consider.

### **Adoption in Alberta**

There are different ways to place a child for adoption in Alberta: government adoption, private adoption or direct placement. Regulations governing all types of adoption are set by the provincial government. Adoption laws vary from province to province.

#### **Government Adoption**

A government adoption means a child is placed with a family through government social services.

There is no provision to provide updated medical information through this type of adoption. Birth parents can be given basic non-identifying information on prospective adoptive parents and choose from these. Generally the child does not go to the adoptive family directly from the hospital, but may first be placed in a foster home for a few days.

#### **Licensed Private Agencies (Open Adoption)**

Many birth parents who choose adoption work with private adoption agencies. It is called an "open adoption" because there is an open exchange of information between the birthparents and adoptive parents and they negotiate conditions of further contact together. Licensed adoption agencies are licensed by the government to work in the area of adoption.

## The Adoption Choice

It is the birth parent's right to choose the agency they wish to work with. Contacting an agency and going in to talk does not mean that a decision to place the child for adoption have necessarily been made. Many people choose to obtain information about adoption as part of their decision-making process.

Through a licensed agency, the birth parent has the right to choose the adoptive family by looking at files, meeting the family they have chosen and having ongoing contact with the family before and after the placement of their child. The agreement for contact following the placement of the child is not considered legally binding; however, it is part of what is mentioned in the court documents. Agencies do consider such agreements to be ethically binding and the vast majority of open adoptions work very well for the child, the birthparents and the adoptive parents. Several licensed agencies are listed in the Resource Section of this booklet.

The birth parent has ten days after consent is signed to change their mind with respect to the adoption.

### Direct Placement

A direct placement adoption means the birth parent places the child with a friend, family friend or relative. Generally it occurs when the birth parent knows the adoptive parents.

Birth parents have the right to request a home assessment of adoptive parents to be considered in the adoptive process. Adoptive parents can file for a direct adoption with the assistance of a self help kit or go through a licensed agency.

In a direct placement the birthmother still has ten days to change their mind from the time the consents are signed.

### Birth Father Rights

Under the Family Law Act (2005), both birth parents are considered legal guardians, regardless of their marital or common law status. Both parents are therefore required to sign consent forms prior to the placement of a child in an adoptive home. If the other birth parent is not known or cannot be located, Alberta Children's Services will be notified about the intention to place the child for adoption.

## Resources

### Abortion Providers

**People's Health Clinic**  
Peter Lougheed Centre  
3500 26 Ave. NE  
Calgary, AB T1Y 6J4  
Ph: 403-943-5716

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/facility.aspx?id=2&service=1071160>

**Kensington Clinic**  
2431 - 5 Ave. NW  
Calgary, AB T2N 0T3  
Ph: 403-283-9117  
[www.kensingtonclinic.com](http://www.kensingtonclinic.com)

### Adoption Services

**Adoption By Choice**  
250, 3115 - 12 Street NE  
Calgary, AB T2E 7J2  
Ph: 403-245-8854  
Edmonton Office: 780-448-1159  
[www.adoptionbychoice.ca](http://www.adoptionbychoice.ca)

**Adoption Options**  
#207, 5940 Macleod Trail SW  
Calgary, AB T2H 2G4  
Ph: 403- 270-8228  
Edmonton Office: 780-433-5656  
[www.adoptionoptions.com](http://www.adoptionoptions.com)

### Calgary and Area Child & Family Services Authority

**Adoption Intake**  
Ph: 403-297-6038  
[www.child.alberta.ca/home/600.cfm](http://www.child.alberta.ca/home/600.cfm)  
See website for more information regarding adoption process and post adoption registry

## The Abortion Choice

### Your Feelings

People may have a lot of different feelings both before and after an abortion and this is normal. If you would like to talk about your feelings, speak to someone you trust or call:

**Centre for Sexuality**

**Ph: 403-283-5580**

**email: [intake@centreforsexuality.ca](mailto:intake@centreforsexuality.ca)**

## The Adoption Choice

The birth parent will have to sign an affidavit outlining why they do not know who or where the other parent is. A lawyer will be required to go to Court on behalf of the adoptive parents to request an Order from the Court to dispense with the need for the other birth parent's consent. All legal costs are covered by the potential adoptive parents.

The other birth parent does have the right to contest an adoption placement, though with counselling, they are often supportive of the plan. In rare circumstances, such as abuse by the other birth parent, the need to inform him may be waived.

### Post Adoption Registry

In Alberta there is a registry where background information, including medical information given at the time of placement is maintained. Through the registry adopted children over the age of 18 can reconnect with birthparents and adult birth siblings (adoptive parents can help children under 18 with this).

On November 1, 2004, when the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act came into effect, the Alberta government opened access to identifying information contained in adoption records. This change affects all adoptions granted in the province prior to January 1, 2005. Birth parents and adoptees, who are 18 years and older, may obtain identifying information about one another, unless a veto is in place at the time of the request.

Individuals who want their identifying information to remain confidential must file a disclosure veto with Alberta's Post Adoption Registry. This veto will prevent the release of any birth registration or adoption information identifying the person.

## The Abortion Choice

The option of abortion may be the right choice for you if you do not feel you can parent at this time in your life, and you are not comfortable with adoption.

Some people think that there is a “type” of person that chooses abortion. What we know is that people of various ages, races, religious, economic and marital statuses choose to have abortions for many reasons. The main question is “Is this the right time for me to have a child?” The following questions may help you explore some of your values and feelings about abortion.

- What were my views on abortion before I became pregnant?
- Have my views of abortion changed now that I am pregnant?
- Do I have any spiritual or moral beliefs that may impact my decision?
- Do I have people in my life that would support me with an abortion choice?
- Do I feel that I need other people to support my choice?
- How do I think that I might feel after an abortion?
- How would making this choice impact my life in both the short and long term?
- What would make this the best choice for me?

Think about your answers and what they mean to you. You may want to discuss your answers with a family member, your partner, a friend or a counsellor.

In Canada, there is no law governing abortion. Access to abortion procedures varies from province to province. Most abortions take place in the first trimester of pregnancy, or up to 12 weeks from conception. The latest a person can get an abortion in Canada is usually 20 weeks but not all clinics will offer abortions up to this limit. Some clinics in the United States will perform abortions up to 27 weeks.

## The Abortion Choice

- To avoid an increased risk of infection and to give the body time to heal, people should not have penetrative sex for three weeks after their abortion.
- A check-up should be arranged with a doctor 2 weeks after the abortion.
- People can expect to get their next normal period in about 4 to 6 weeks.
- A pregnancy test may remain positive for about 2 weeks after an abortion.

### Potential Risks

Abortion is a very safe procedure, but all medical procedures have some risk. The most common problems are hemorrhaging (bleeding), infection and drug side effects. This happens to fewer than 1 in 100 people.

### Warning Signs

If a person were to experience any one or more of the following symptoms within a few days of an abortion, they should call the clinic where they had the abortion performed, a doctor or they should go to an emergency department:

- Fever over 37.8 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Abdominal pain that is worse than period cramps
- Bleeding heavier than a normal menstrual period (i.e., soaking a pad in less than 1 hour)
- Discharge from the vagina that has an odor.
- Prolonged signs of pregnancy such as continuing sore breasts or nausea
- No period after 6 - 8 weeks

### Birth Control

It is possible for a person to get pregnant soon after their abortion. People should try to make a plan for birth control and have the supplies needed before having intercourse again. If a person plans to start using birth control pills, they should take their first pill the day after their abortion. A person may also want to consider using condoms to prevent any sexually transmitted infections (STI's).

## The Abortion Choice

### Before a Person Leaves the Clinic

When the procedure is done a person can expect to remain at the clinic for about 30 - 45 minutes until the effects of the drugs wear off. They can expect to be at the clinic for 2 to 3 hours in total for the procedure. A nurse will check the blood pressure and give them something small to eat and drink. As soon as the person feels well they can go home. It is important to arrange a ride home from the clinic (either from a support person or a taxi). DO NOT drive yourself home; the drugs from the procedure may affect your ability to drive for up to 24 hours following the procedure.

### What To Expect After the Procedure:

Some people may feel light-headed and tired on the day of the abortion.

Signs of pregnancy (such as nausea or breast tenderness) should stop within about 4 to 5 days.

A person can expect to have vaginal bleeding similar to a period for about one week. Small blood clots may also be passed. People should use sanitary pads until bleeding stops. Do not use tampons as this could lead to an infection.

Some people have no bleeding at all after the procedure.

Some people may experience abdominal cramps. Medicine such as an acetaminophen or ibuprofen product can be taken to alleviate any discomfort.

Because of the medication given during the procedure a person's judgment and memory may be affected for up to 24 hours. People should not drive for 24 hours.

Most people feel well enough to go back to work or school the next day. It is recommended to avoid strenuous exercise for a few days and try to get lots of rest.

People can shower or have a bath after the procedure. It is recommended to use plain soap, not bubble bath, and do not douche as this could lead to infection.

## The Abortion Choice

Be careful when looking for information or support about abortion. There are agencies and groups that are strongly opposed to this option. They may tell you that they provide "abortion counselling" but they do not support abortion as a choice and will not help you set up a referral for an abortion. Check carefully when you are calling for help and ask if the agency will provide abortion referrals.

### Importance of a test for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's)

If you are considering abortion, it is wise to be checked for sexually transmitted infection (STI) before having the procedure. Abortion involves dilating or opening the cervix and if an STI is present, it could move up into the uterus.

This may cause serious complications like infection or pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). STI's can be present with few or no symptoms so you may not be aware you are infected. STI tests are available at STI clinics, your doctor's office and at many health units. Because individual clinics may require other tests before the procedure and may offer some tests at the time of the procedure, you may want to inquire about testing beforehand.

It is also important to remember that abortions that are self-induced, done by unqualified people or done under inadequate or unsterile conditions can be very dangerous. See the Resource Section at the back of this booklet for abortion providers in Calgary and for clinics that will do STI tests.

# The Abortion Choice

## Methods of Abortion

### Medical Abortion

Medication abortion is done using a combination of medications, together called Mifegymiso. If your pregnancy is between 6 and 9 weeks (63 days), counting from the first day of your last normal menstrual period, you may wish to consider a medical or medication abortion rather than an aspiration procedure.

All assessments including ultrasound and lab work (blood test for Rh type) are done on the day of your appointment so you do not have to go anywhere other than Kensington Clinic for evaluation of your pregnancy to receive this medication. The medication is provided to you at the clinic free of charge if you have Alberta Health Care Insurance.

Before you receive the medication, you will receive an ultrasound to confirm you are no more than 9 weeks (63 days) pregnant. If you are eligible for a medication abortion, you will meet with our counsellor to discuss the procedure in detail. You will then meet with the physician who will take your medical history and start the treatment. It is essential that you are able to return to the clinic for a follow-up ultrasound or go to a laboratory for a blood test that will determine if the abortion is complete. You must also be willing to have a uterine aspiration procedure (D&C) if the medication fails to end the pregnancy, as there is some evidence that the medications can cause fetal damage.

**Side Effects:** Most people will need pain medications such as ibuprofen and Tylenol to help with the pain associated with medication abortion. Heavy bleeding resulting in soaking 1-2 large pads every hour may occur for several hours. Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, chills, headaches and fatigue are common side effects of the medications. Some people will find these side effects can be intense. If you are unsure you are can manage these symptoms at home, you should choose an aspiration abortion instead.

For more information, you can visit <https://kensingtonclinic.com/abortion-procedure/medical-abortion/>

# The Abortion Choice

## Aspiration Abortion

### Aspiration Abortion

Vacuum aspiration is the most common and safest abortion procedure. It is performed up to 20 weeks from the first day of a person's last menstrual period (LMP).

An aspiration abortion will take between 5 and 10 minutes. A doctor will start an intravenous line (I.V.) with a small needle in a person's arm or hand and give them some medication to make their feel sleepy and relaxed. The person will be drowsy but not completely asleep during the procedure. Once these drugs have taken effect, the doctor will put some freezing in the person's cervix and gently dilate (open) the cervix.

There are two methods that are used to dilate a person's cervix: rod dilation and laminaria dilation. Rod dilation is the method used when a person is earlier in their pregnancy, generally 13 weeks and under. Rod dilation is a method that uses tapered metal rods to gradually open the cervix. This method is done immediately prior to the abortion.

Laminaria dilation is used for later term abortions. A laminaria is inserted in a person's cervix usually the day before the procedure. The laminaria absorbs moisture in a person's body and gently opens the cervix. The person returns to the clinic the next day for the procedure.

Once the cervix is dilated (opened) the doctor will then insert a small tube to gently remove the contents of the uterus (womb). A person may notice a feeling of pressure and some cramps in their lower abdomen. However, most people do not feel any pain at all. Afterwards, most people do not remember very much about the procedure.

For more information, you can visit <https://kensingtonclinic.com/abortion-procedure/vacuum-aspiration/>