

## Information about abortion

### Decision to terminate the pregnancy

There are many possible reasons for deciding to terminate a pregnancy. The decision to terminate the pregnancy can be easy and feel like the only correct option from the start. Sometimes even a planned pregnancy can become unwanted if fetal abnormalities are detected, or if life circumstances change. Usually, abortion evokes mixed emotions and thoughts. Other options to abortion are carrying the pregnancy to term and either raising the child or giving the child up for adoption.

The decision to terminate the pregnancy must be carefully considered and even though there is only a limited amount of time to make it, you must be sure it is the right decision for you. Discussing the decision with family and loved ones can help you choose what you want to do, but you must not feel pressured into making your decision. You can receive support for making your decision by reading the following article from the Duodecim Terveyskirjasto (only available in Finnish): [Abortti ja psyykinen hyvinvointi](#).

### Abortion law in Finland

**Until the end of 12 weeks of pregnancy (12+0 weeks)**, pregnancy can be terminated upon the pregnant person's request. There is no need to provide a reason for the request.

**After this period, until the end of 20 weeks of pregnancy (20+0 weeks)**, pregnancy can be terminated with the permission of Valvira (National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health) when at least one of the following legal requirements is met:

- Considerable hardship caused by current life condition or other circumstances (social reasons)
- The pregnant person is under 17 or over 40 years of age, or has given birth to four children
- The pregnancy is a result of a crime
- The unborn child's mother or father has a serious illness that would significantly affect their ability to take care of the child.

In case of fetal anomalies or serious disease, the pregnancy can be terminated with Valvira's permission until the end of 24 weeks of pregnancy (24+0 weeks). The pregnancy can be terminated at any point if its continuation puts the mother's life or health in peril.

## Examinations before abortion

Make an appointment at the hospital for abortion after having a positive pregnancy test. The appointment is usually held within 1 to 2 weeks, depending on how far along the pregnancy is. You will fill the necessary forms at the hospital. During your appointment, a doctor will verify the gestational age by performing a gynecological ultrasound examination. We recommend you schedule approximately 2 hours in total for the appointment.

## Abortion methods

You and your doctor together decide what abortion method is used. If the pregnancy has lasted less than 12 weeks, the abortion can be carried out either medically or surgically. **In most cases, the pregnancy is terminated medically either at home or at the hospital.** When the pregnancy is terminated medically, there is no need for general anesthesia and surgical uterine procedure. If the pregnancy has lasted more than 10 weeks, the termination will always be managed medically and it is carried out at the hospital. Surgical abortion is performed under general anesthesia at the hospital.

## After abortion

Recovering from the abortion varies from person to person. **Post abortion bleeding** can last for 2 to 4 weeks, and menstrual cycle will usually start up 4 to 7 weeks after the termination. Because new pregnancy can start even before the first period, remember to **ensure you are using adequate contraception immediately after the termination.** You can talk about contraception with your doctor and the nurses. For more information about pregnancy prevention, please visit [www.terveyskirjasto.fi](http://www.terveyskirjasto.fi) (only available in Finnish) and [www.vaestoliitto.fi](http://www.vaestoliitto.fi).

It is important that you let yourself feel whatever feelings you are feeling and take good care of yourself after the abortion. You can feel relieved and happy, but you can also be sad that the pregnancy has ended. Sometimes abortion can also cause feelings of regret and guilt. You can talk about these feelings with family or close friends, but you may also need help from a professional. You can ask the hospital or your local health center to arrange an appointment to talk with a psychiatric nurse, a psychologist, a sexual counselor, a social worker or a hospital chaplain. You can talk about any questions you might have with the medical staff in confidence, no matter how sensitive.

## Possible complications

Problems with recovery after a abortion are possible with either method, but they are relatively rare. Sometimes the abortion can cause significant pain and heavy bleeding. Heavy, delayed bleeding with a foul smell, prolonged abdominal pain and fever are signs of a uterine infection, which is usually treated with antibiotics. Sometimes the reason behind prolonged bleeding is the incomplete emptying of the uterus, which can be treated by repeating the medical treatment or by performing a surgical procedure. Abortion has not been proven to cause problems with achieving pregnancy later on, but repeated pregnancy terminations can increase the risk of

premature birth in future pregnancies. If you experience problems recovering from the abortion, contact the hospital where you received treatment.

For more information about abortion, please visit [www.terveyskyla.fi/naistalo](http://www.terveyskyla.fi/naistalo), seksuaaliterveys (only available in Finnish and Swedish).