

Myths and Facts about Abortion

1. Having an abortion has a higher risk to your health than having a baby.

Fact: continuing a pregnancy and going through childbirth has 10 x higher health risks than having a first trimester abortion.

- Paul M & Stewart F (2007) Abortion. In: Hatcher RA et al. Contraceptive Technology, 19th revised edition. Ardent Media, Inc, New York, NY, p664
- Grimes DA (2006) Estimation of pregnancy-related mortality risk by pregnancy outcome, United States, 1991to 1999. Am J Obstet Gynecol,194, 92-94
- Danel I, Berg C, Johnson CH, Atrash H (2003) Magnitude of maternal morbidity during labor and delivery: United States, 1993-1997. Am J Public Health, 93, 631-634
- Hakim-Elahi E, Tovell HM, Burnhill MS (1990) Complications of first trimester abortion: a report of 170,000 cases. Obstet Gynecol, 76, 129-135

2. Abortion increases your risk of breast cancer.

Fact: Abortion does NOT change your breast cancer risk.

- American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (2009) ACOG (American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology) Committee Opinion: Induced Abortion and Breast Cancer Risk. Obstet Gynecol 113 (6): pp 1417-1418
- Beral V, Bull D, Doll R, Peto R, Reeves G, & Collaborative Group on Hormonal Factors in Breast Cancer (2004) Breast cancer and abortion: Collaborative reanalysis of data from 53 epidemiological studies, including 83,000 women with breast cancer from 16 countries. Lancet, 363(9414), 1007-1016
- National Cancer Institute. (2005) Summary report: Early reproductive events and breast cancer workshop. Issues in Law & Medicine, 21(2), 161-165

3. A woman is more likely to have mental health problems (like depression) if she has an abortion instead of continuing an unplanned pregnancy.

Fact: There is no increased risk of mental health problems for women with unintended pregnancies if they have an abortion compared to a birth.

The American Psychological Association (APA) Task Force on Mental Health and Abortion recently completed a comprehensive review of the best research about mental health and abortion. The Task Force found that the best evidence shows that among women with an unplanned pregnancy, women who have a single, first-trimester abortion are not at greater risk for mental health problems than if they deliver that pregnancy.

What that means is that for all the women who have an unplanned pregnancy: some will continue that pregnancy and have a baby; others will have an abortion. The rate of women having depression in the abortion group is **not** any higher than the rate of women in the continuing the pregnancy group.

The best predictor of how well a woman will do after abortion is how well she was doing before abortion.

- Major B, Appelbaum M, Beckman L, Dutton M, Russo, NF, West C (2008) Report of the APA Task Force on Mental Health and Abortion. 08/13/08. <http://www.apa.org/releases/abortion-report.pdf> . Accessed 8 July 2009.
- Charles VE, Polis CB, Sridhara, SK, Blum RW (2008) Abortion and long-term mental health outcomes: A systematic review of the evidence. Contraception, 78(6), 436-450

4. Having an abortion will make it more difficult to get pregnant in the future.

Fact: A single first trimester abortion does not have a significant effect on future fertility.

- Paul M & Stewart F (2007) Abortion. In: Hatcher RA et al. Contraceptive Technology, 19th revised edition. Ardent Media, Inc, New York, NY, p664.
- Hogue, CJ (1986) Impact of abortion on subsequent fecundity. Clinics in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, 13(1), 95-103

5. All religions condemn abortions.

Fact: There are several religions and religious groups that support women's right to make decisions about birth control and abortion. The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) was founded in 1973 by pro-choice clergy and lay leaders from different faiths and traditions. For more information about religious groups that support women in their decisions, take a look at the RCRC website. <http://www.rcrc.org/>