



Abortion Fact Sheet

This fact sheet describes typical abortion care, which may vary slightly depending on provider and facility.

Type of Abortion	Medication Abortion	Dilation & Curettage (D&C)	Dilation & Evacuation (D&E)	Induction Termination
Other names for this type of abortion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abortion pills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abortion procedure Suction curettage Vacuum aspiration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abortion procedure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induction abortion Labor and delivery abortion
When the abortion can be done	Up to 11 weeks and 0 days from the first day of your last period.	Typically, up to 14 weeks from the first day of your last period.	Typically, from 14 weeks from the first day of your last period up to the legal limit.	Typically, up to the legal limit.
What happens before the abortion	The health care provider will give you medications, called mifepristone and misoprostol, and tell you how to use them.	The health care provider may give you medications to soften the cervix (the opening of the uterus) before the procedure.	The health care provider may place soft dilators into the cervix (the opening of the uterus) for a few hours or days before the abortion to slowly stretch and soften the cervix. You may also be given medications to soften the cervix.	Medications called mifepristone, misoprostol, and/or Pitocin may be used to start the labor process.
What happens during the abortion	<p>The medications stop the pregnancy and empty the uterus at home like a miscarriage.</p> <p>You will follow up with your health care provider (in person, by telehealth, or at a lab) to make sure the abortion is complete.</p>	<p>Smooth dilator rods are put into the cervix until it is big enough for the health care provider to put a thin tube through the cervix into the uterus.</p> <p>The tube is attached to a suction machine, which gently removes the pregnancy. This only takes a few minutes.</p>	<p>Smooth dilator rods are put into the cervix until it is big enough for the health care provider to put a thin tube through the cervix into the uterus.</p> <p>The tube is attached to a suction machine, which gently removes the pregnancy. This only takes a few minutes.</p> <p>Other instruments will also be used to completely empty the uterus.</p>	<p>Medications open the cervix and contract the uterus, which pushes out the pregnancy.</p> <p>The medications can be given as a pill by mouth, into a vein, or into the vagina.</p>
Common side effects	<p>Strong cramps and bleeding may last for several hours.</p> <p>Fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches, feeling weak or dizzy, fainting for 24 hours.</p> <p>Light bleeding may last for 2 weeks or more.</p>	<p>You will have cramping during the procedure. Pain medication (anesthesia) can make you more comfortable but may have more risks.</p> <p>You may have cramps and bleeding after the procedure. Light bleeding may last for 2 weeks or more.</p>	<p>You will have cramping during the procedure. Pain medication (anesthesia) can make you more comfortable but may have more risks.</p> <p>You may have cramps and bleeding after the procedure. Light bleeding may last for 2 weeks or more.</p>	<p>Strong cramping.</p> <p>Pain medication (anesthesia) can make you more comfortable but may have more risks.</p> <p>Bleeding can last for a week or more.</p>
Location for the procedure	At home	In a health center or hospital	In a health center or hospital	In a hospital

Choices you have other than abortion

You can choose to continue the pregnancy and parent or make plans for legal adoption.

When can abortion be done in Massachusetts

How far along in pregnancy you are is called the gestational age. You can have different types of abortions at different gestational ages:

- You can have a medication abortion up to 11 weeks and 0 days from the first day of your last period.
- You can have an abortion procedure or induction abortion up to the legal limit, depending on the discretion of the provider and facility.
- There is no gestational age limit for abortions for certain fetal birth defects or if the pregnant person's health or life is in danger because of the pregnancy.

Pain management during the abortion

- Pain pills like ibuprofen can help with cramps.
- Local anesthesia reduces pain while you stay awake. It is injected into the cervix.
- Nitrous oxide helps you relax and is given in the form of gas through a mask.
- Moderate sedation decreases pain and makes you sleepy. It is given in a shot into a vein in the arm (IV).
- General anesthesia stops the pain and makes you unconscious for a short time. It is given through an IV or in the form of gas through a mask.

Rare complications

- Medication abortion and abortion procedures
 - Hemorrhage that needs a blood transfusion
 - Infection
 - Pregnancy tissue left in the uterus
 - Reactions to the medications
 - Blood clotting problems
- Dilation & Curettage (D&C), Dilation & Evacuation (D&E), and induction termination
 - A tear in the cervix or uterus, or injury to other nearby organs in the belly.
 - In very rare cases, an abortion procedure may lead to major surgery, including hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) or injury to the bowel. Death may occur, which happens in fewer than 1 in 100,000 abortions and is 10 times lower than the rate of death from childbirth.

Contact your health care provider if you have

- Heavy bleeding
- Pain or discomfort that is getting worse
- Weakness, fever, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea more than 24 hours after the abortion

Public assistance

The state cannot deny you public assistance or any other benefits if you decide to have an abortion or if you decide to continue your pregnancy. For information on eligibility and benefits, contact the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/departement-of-transitional-assistance>.

Scheduling an abortion

- To find a safe abortion provider, <https://www.abortioncaremass.org> has a comprehensive list of local providers.
- If you need additional support finding a provider or getting to your appointment, you can call the Abortion Access Coordinator at (617) 616-1636.

Paying for an abortion

- MassHealth Standard and MassHealth MCOs cover abortion services. Your health care provider will call MassHealth to cover the costs of the procedure.
- If you are pregnant, live in Massachusetts and don't have insurance, you can call Health Care for All for help getting insurance at (800) 272-4232. Be sure to tell them you are pregnant so your application can be processed immediately. They can help you even if you have not decided whether to continue your pregnancy or have an abortion.
- If you have private insurance, check with your insurance plan or health care provider to find out if your plan covers abortion services.
- If you need help paying for your abortion, let your health care provider know right away. They can help you find financial assistance and connect you to national and local abortion funds who help people pay for abortions.

Minors and abortion

- If you are age 16 or older, you have the legal right to choose and consent for your own abortion. You do not need the consent of a parent or guardian.
- If you are under age 16 and married, widowed, divorced, or an emancipated minor, you have the legal right to choose and consent for your own abortion.
- If you are under age 16 and do not meet the criteria above, you have two choices:
 1. You can bring one parent or legal guardian to give their consent for your decision.
 2. A judge can approve you to choose abortion without telling a parent or guardian. The Abortion Access Coordinators can connect you with a free lawyer. The lawyer will set up your appointment with the judge and help you through the process. Abortion Access Coordinators can be reached at (617) 616-1636.