



**Information regarding abortion up
to the 12th week of pregnancy**

Pregnant - What next?

Are you pregnant and considering a termination? We have compiled the following information. You alone decide whether or not to have an abortion. No one can decide for you! Abortion is legal in Germany as long as you observe the following:

- A pregnancy can be terminated up to the 12th week of pregnancy.
- You are required by law to first receive counselling from a state recognised provider. The counselling is free and anonymous.
- Following the counselling you will receive a certificate to prove your attendance. This is called a Beratungsschein. Bring your passport or identification card with you to the counselling center in order to receive this.
- In the counselling center you will receive the addresses of doctor's practices or clinics which perform abortions.
- There is a 3 day waiting period between the consultation and the abortion which has to be observed. The abortion is then only possible, at the earliest, on the fourth day after your counselling session.

The consultants are bound by confidentiality. You will have a safe space to consider your options.

The three day waiting period. A time for reflection.

During this time you can reflect on your decision and undergo further counselling if required. If you are sure of your decision, you can make

an appointment for a preliminary consultation in a doctor's practice or clinic of your choice.

Cost of the abortion

You have to pay for the abortion yourself if you have an income. In the event that you have no income or a low income, you will have to apply to the statutory health insurer to cover the costs of the procedure. Then you will have to provide confirmation of this before the abortion. This is called a Kostenübernahmebescheinigung. To be eligible for this coverage, you are required to provide documentation of your place of residence and income. The income of your partner is not taken into account.

The costs of the preliminary examination and follow up appointment, as well as any further treatment in the case of complications, are covered by the insurance provider.

Preliminary consultation in a doctor's practice or clinic

You are required to bring the following to your first appointment in a practice or clinic:

- Proof of counselling attendance (Beratungsschein)
- Confirmation of coverage of costs from the statutory health insurer (Kostenübernahmebescheinigung)
- Health insurance card or medical treatment certificate and, if possible, a referral.
- If available, your blood typing.

At this preliminary consultation you will discuss with a doctor how an

abortion is performed and which risks are associated. Always ask for clarity if you do not understand something or if something is concerning you! Bring an interpreter with you to every appointment if you have trouble understanding German. You have to be able to understand the preliminary consultation. You will be required to sign a consent form before the procedure. In further appointments, you will also have to be able to understand the doctor/s. It concerns your health.

The procedure

You have the choice between 2 abortion methods. However, a medical abortion is only possible up to the seventh week of pregnancy. After this, an instrumental abortion has to be performed.

Medical abortion

With the assistance of a doctor, a pregnancy may be terminated in the early stages by means of medication. This method is without surgery or anaesthesia, but is a longer process. Not all doctor's practices offer this method. Doctors who offer a medical abortion do so in different ways. You will either have to visit the practice three times or you will receive the medication with the second active ingredient to take home with you. You will receive a telephone number to call if you have any questions during the process. The abortion begins by taking the active ingredient mifepristone (brand name: Mifegyne®) under medical supervision at the practice. After this step, you go home. You may experience side effects such as nausea, vomiting and pain. If necessary, get a doctor's certificate to excuse you from work. The details will not be provided to your employer. The active ingredient mifepristone prevents further development of the pregnancy. In addition to this, the uterine lining

and the gestational sac loosen themselves from the embryo. The cervix opens and the uterus contracts. After approximately 24 hours you will begin to bleed, similar to a menstrual period. Very few women experience heavy bleeding. Only use sanitary pads during the abortion. 36 to 48 hours after taking mifepristone, you will take a second medication. You will either do this at the doctor's practice or have taken it home with you after the first appointment. The second medication contains prostaglandins, which allows the uterine lining and the embryo to be expelled by bleeding. It also enhances the effects of mifepristone. You will receive the appropriate medication to combat side effects such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and pain. It is advised that you take good care of yourself and rest throughout the entire period.

Instrumental abortion

This method is performed under general or local anaesthetic, usually by removing the pregnancy tissue with the suction method; the suction curettage. Some doctors perform a curettage with a curette - a spoon-like instrument with blunt edges. Please note: If the procedure is performed under general anaesthetic, you may not eat, drink, smoke or chew chewing gum for several hours prior to the procedure. This is very important! You may receive a tablet during the preliminary consultation which you have to take a few hours before the procedure. This tablet makes the cervix softer and easier to stretch. At the practice, you will receive general or local anaesthetic. The cervix is then carefully stretched a few millimetres so that a suction curettage can be inserted to remove the pregnancy tissue and end the pregnancy. Afterwards, a check is performed to ensure that the procedure was carried out successfully and that the tissue has been removed. The entire procedure is over in about 15 minutes. When it is complete, you can rest

and recover in a designated room until your circulation returns to normal. It is a requirement that someone accompanies you home as you will not be fit to drive. You should ensure that you will be looked after for the next 24 hours. This person can assist you or call for help should any complications arise. In the days following the abortion, there will be changes to your hormones, and your breasts and abdomen may feel different. You may also experience a negative change in your mood. It is advised that you take care after the procedure and stay home from work if necessary. Details of your condition will not on your doctor's certificate.

Freedom of choice

You have the right to change your decision and continue the pregnancy at any time before taking the medication prior to the instrumental procedure. In this case, you should cancel your appointment at the doctor's practice or clinic!

After the abortion

Allow yourself some rest in the first few days after the procedure. Bleeding and abdominal pain are normal after abortion. Take medication to relieve the pain if necessary. If you have a fever above 38.5° C (100° F) or have foul-smelling discharge, see your doctor. There may be signs of inflammation. Regarding hygiene, only use sanitary pads and the shower to wash yourself. Refrain from sexual intercourse in order to reduce inflammation. Do not forget your follow-up appointment! Look after your health responsibly!

Contraception

Your next menstrual cycle will begin directly following the abortion. This means you can get pregnant again. Should you not want a pregnancy, start using a safe method of contraception that suits you. If you are unsure how to use contraception, or your partner doesn't agree with it, visit our contraception counselling center.

Further information

Criminal indication

If, from a medical perspective, there is reason to believe that the pregnancy was caused by rape or sexual abuse, the pregnancy can be terminated up to the 12th week after conception. In order for this to occur, a doctor has to issue a criminal indication. The statutory health insurer will then cover the costs of the abortion. There will be no obligation to attend counselling, but a reliable counselling service is, of course, still offered to those who need to discuss their situation in a safe space. It is not always necessary that an indication is reported to the police. However, for girls who are under 14 years of age, it is always a criminal indication.

Abortion in a foreign country

If you are planning to have your abortion performed in a foreign country, the legal requirements of that country will apply. Your insurance provider will not cover the costs in this instance. According to German law, you will not be punished if you have evidence of attending mandatory counselling in a state-recognised center before the procedure.

Counselling offer

The decision between a pregnancy or an abortion has to be made by you alone - no one is allowed to make the decision for you or force you to make a decision! Take as much time as you need to decide. This serious decision deserves careful consideration. This also applies to minors: they can neither be forced to go through with a pregnancy nor have an abortion.

Contact details for the counselling center:

Impressum:

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