

These instructions are intended for patients who are currently under our care. The Wellbeing Services County of Southwest Finland. Turku University Hospital.

Information about abortion

Decision to have an abortion

There are many possible reasons for deciding to have an abortion. The decision to have an abortion 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.

Even though there is only a limited amount of time to make it, the decision have an abortion must be carefully considered. 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), abortion can be carried out 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), abortion can be carried out with the permission of Finnish Supervisory Agency 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 a serious disease, abortion can be carried out with Valvira's permission until the end of 24 weeks of pregnancy (24+0 weeks). Pregnancy can be terminated at any point if its continuation puts the mother's life or health in peril.

Examinations before abortion

If you have had a positive pregnancy test and do not wish to continue with the pregnancy, make an appointment at the hospital. The appointment is usually within 1 to 2 weeks, depending on how far along the pregnancy is. You will receive the necessary forms to fill when you arrive for your appointment. During the appointment, a doctor will verify the gestational age by performing a gynecological ultrasound exam. We recommend you schedule approximately 2 hours in total for the appointment.

Different 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 abortion is carried out medically either at home or at the hospital.** In case of a medication abortion, there is no need for general anesthesia and a surgical uterine procedure. If the pregnancy has lasted for more than 10 weeks, the medical abortion is always carried out at the hospital. Surgical abortion is performed under general anesthesia at the hospital.

After the abortion

Recovering from an abortion varies from person to person. Bleeding and pain similar to menstrual pain is common after a termination. Ensuring that you start using contraception immediately after the abortion is important if another pregnancy is not desired. For more information about pregnancy prevention, please visit the following websites: Pregnancy prevention (terveyskyla.fi) (only available in Finnish and Swedish), Pregnancy prevention (terveyskirjasto.fi) (only available in Finnish), and Contraception (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 having an 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 for counselling and support. You can talk about any questions you might have, no matter how sensitive, with the medical staff in confidence.

Possible complications

Problems with recovery after an abortion are possible with either method, but they are relatively rare. Delayed, heavy or foul smelling bleeding, prolonged abdominal pain and fever can be symptoms of a uterine infection, which is usually treated with antibiotics. Sometimes the reason behind prolonged bleeding is incomplete emptying of the uterus, which can be treated by repeating the medication or by performing a surgical procedure. Abortion has not been proven to cause problems with achieving pregnancy later on, however repeated abortions 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, seksuaaliterveys (only available in Finnish and Swedish)