

## Abortion Risks and Consequences

A woman chooses abortion because she is not ready to accept the consequences of her pregnancy, whether it involves single motherhood, the exposure of her sexual activity, or anger of boyfriend or parents. But abortion also has serious and long-lasting consequences. Much of the following material was taken from articles by David Reardon, of the Elliot Institute. Those articles and others are available at [www.afterabortion.org](http://www.afterabortion.org).

**Physical Risks:** Let's think about what happens during a surgical abortion. First, the doctor must force the cervix to open enough to allow the instruments to enter the uterus. This forced opening may damage the cervical muscle, especially in teens, whose organs are less mature, or perhaps in women who have never given birth. A damaged cervix may have difficulty remaining properly closed during a later pregnancy, increasing the risk of miscarriage and premature birth. Then the doctor reaches into the uterus with powerful suction and/or sharp instruments to remove the developing baby. The baby is securely attached to the uterine wall, by way of the placenta, where nutrients and oxygen are absorbed from the mother. The removal of the baby may damage the uterine lining, leaving scar tissue. The more abortions a woman has had, the more scar tissue she is likely to have, possibly affecting the development of the placenta of future children trying to imbed themselves in the uterine wall. If scar tissue partially blocks the opening from the fallopian tube into the uterus, the chance of a tubal pregnancy is increased. Changes are occurring in the breasts during pregnancy as well, preparing to produce milk for the newborn. These changes are abnormally interrupted by an abortion. The following list includes some of the documented risks and consequences of abortion (1):

- A major study found that 48% of women who aborted their first pregnancies experienced abortion-related complications in later pregnancies. Women in that group experienced 2.3 miscarriages for every one live birth. (2)
- Among teenagers who aborted their first pregnancy, 66% experienced miscarriage or premature birth of their second child. (3)
- Premature delivery, abnormal placental development and other labor complications, which can all be caused by abortion damage to the uterus, are the leading causes of handicaps in newborns.(4)
- Abortion is significantly related to an increased risk of subsequent ectopic (tubal) pregnancies. Ectopic pregnancies, in turn, are life threatening and may result in reduced fertility.(5)
- The risk of breast cancer almost doubles after one abortion, and rises even further with two or more abortions.(6)

**Psychological Risks:** God gives mothers a maternal instinct to nurture and protect their children. Abortion clearly goes directly against that natural inclination. Dr Julius Fogel, psychiatrist and abortionist states: "She destroys a pregnancy, she is destroying herself. **There is no way it can be innocuous**... I know that as a psychiatrist."(7) Many women may have an extended period of denial, when they are repressing their feeling regarding the abortion. These repressed feelings may cause psychosomatic illnesses and psychiatric or behavioral symptoms in other areas of her life. As a result, some counselors report that unacknowledged post-abortion distress is actually the underlying cause for the pain that brought them to seek therapy. (8) Abortion may be experienced as a traumatic event for a variety of reasons. First of all, it is physically painful and can be perceived as sexually intrusive, similar to rape. (9) If the abortion is forced or coerced (by either male partners or parents) it is an unwanted violation of her body. Even when the woman has chosen abortion herself because of compelling reasons,

she may still perceive abortion as the violent killing of her own child, bringing about significant guilt feelings in addition to the fear, pain, and anxiety surrounding the abortion. (10)

When a woman experiences trauma, her “fight or flight” defense mechanism is aroused, to mobilize her energy to deal with the event. If the trauma is severe, the defense mechanism can be overwhelmed by the trauma, and the person feels intense fear, a feeling of helplessness and loss of control. The “fight or flight” mechanism can be over- stimulated, or hyper-aroused, which causes the components of the defense mechanism to become disorganized, disconnected from present circumstances, and take on a life of their own, resulting in abnormal behavior and major personality disorders. This situation is referred to as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD. When the causative trauma is abortion, it is referred to as Post Abortion Syndrome. (10) As an example of this disconnection of mental functions, some PTSD victims may experience intense emotion but without clear memory of the event; others may remember every detail but without emotion; still others may reexperience both the event and the emotions in intrusive and overwhelming flashback experiences. (11)

It was seen that the physical consequences of abortion, by increasing future miscarriages, problems with the placenta, and premature births, posed a threat to the health of a woman’s future children as well as to her own health. The psychological consequences of abortion also present risks to the welfare of her future children, since the way she raises those children will certainly be affected by her psychological state. Perhaps due to low self-esteem, depression, substance abuse, or other abortion related issues, many post-abortion women develop a greater difficulty forming lasting bonds with a male partner.(10) Women who have more than one abortion (representing about 45% of all abortions) are more likely to require public assistance, in part because they are also more likely to become single parents. (12)

The following list includes some additional documented risks and consequences of abortion (10):

- A 5 year retrospective study in two Canadian provinces found significantly greater use of medical and psychiatric services among aborted women. 25% of aborted women made visits to psychiatrists as compared to 3% of the control group. (13)
- **Alcohol abuse:** Abortion is significantly linked with a two fold increased risk of alcohol abuse among women. (14) Abortion followed by alcohol abuse is linked to violent behavior, divorce or separation, auto accidents, and job loss. (15)
- **Child neglect or abuse:** Abortion is linked with increased depression, violent behavior, alcohol and drug abuse, replacement pregnancies, and reduced maternal bonding with children born subsequently. These factors are closely associated with child abuse and would appear to confirm individual clinical assessments linking post-abortion trauma with subsequent child abuse. (16)

#### References:

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