

## ***Health and Safety Checklist for women considering abortion***

Having “no choice but abortion” is not a choice. We recommend that you **not** “just hurry and get it over with.” As with all surgery, abortion has inherent risks that cannot be eliminated and should not be ignored. The following information may educate you on some of the risks encountered during the abortion process. Our purpose is to maximize your safety by increasing your knowledge.

**1. Get a blood test or laboratory quality urine test kit. Because of the financial interest involved, do not confirm your pregnancy at an abortion facility. A positive urine test does *not necessarily* indicate a living fetus that will be born.**

You could be pursuing abortion based on too little information. Former abortion clinic manager Carol Everett testified in Congress that she regularly sold abortions to women who were not truly pregnant but feared they were, thereby enhancing the facility’s income.<sup>1</sup> We provide a laboratory quality urine test kit free of charge as a service to women.

**2. Confirm that you have a viable intrauterine pregnancy (viable means one that is capable of developing under normal conditions).**

Studies show that at least 1 in 10 and *up to* 31% of recognized and unrecognized pregnancies end early by natural miscarriage. It is your right to expect and to view an ultrasound prior to having an abortion.

**3. Explore all of your choices with an agency that does not have a financial interest in your decision.**

Avoid abortion providers that “offer counseling” but promote abortion as the most workable choice. Exercise your right to informed consent! Make certain that all of your questions are answered clearly.

**4. Do not allow anyone to sell you a surgical abortion prior to the 8th week of pregnancy.**

Early on, the human embryo is too small to locate easily. A blind procedure relying entirely on “feel,” early surgical abortion poses risk of internal damage: the force of the suction tube could perforate your uterus and bowel or the abortion could be incomplete, leaving behind part(s) of your embryo, posing risk of infection. It is also possible that the entire pregnancy will be missed at this stage and you would remain pregnant.

**5. Be careful if the abortion provider clinic of your choice is “packed” with clients.**

It is likely that the clinic is operating “assembly line” style. This situation does not accommodate the physician taking the time to know you, your specific situation, and your health concerns.

## **6. Insist on knowing the name and credentials of the person performing the abortion.**

To protect your interests in case of injury, know your abortion provider's name! Are you certain he or she is a *licensed* physician? **Are you certain that he or she is a *board-certified* obstetrician and gynecologist?** (We feel obliged to warn you about one of the largest abortion chains in Mass., Repro Associates (also known as Charles Circle Associates and Woman Care). In a front-page story on 12/9/95 *The Boston Globe* reported that the owner, Howard Silverman, has been investigated for allegedly rigging ultrasound tests in order to have women undergo more expensive—and possibly riskier—abortions. Dr. Silverman lacks hospital admitting privileges at area hospitals, in part because he admitted to sexually molesting a teenage patient: According to the Board of Registration in Medicine, Silverman “on two separate occasions placed his mouth on the patient’s breast for several minutes.” In subsequent disciplinary proceedings, Silverman admitted that these allegations were true. Other serious charges have been made against Silverman as well: see “Board OKs claims against doctor,” *The Boston Globe*, July 2, 1999, D20.)

**NOTE: Repro is not unique. Many other abortion facilities have malpractice judgments pending due to substandard care and/or patient injuries.**

## **7. Check to see if the abortion center is a *licensed* medical clinic.**

Abortion providers are *not* required by law to be licensed *clinics* and therefore are *not* required to provide the standard of medical care that women deserve and expect. For example, Repro advertises itself as a licensed private practice; this gives a misleading sense of meeting high safety standards. It is actually the opposite.

## **8. Ask what you should do if you have complications from the abortion.**

Find out whether the abortion provider has a 24-hour hotline. It is in your best interest to have a comprehensive follow-up exam (a full pelvic examination) with your own physician two weeks after the procedure.

## **9. Make sure the clinician takes a detailed health history.**

Many important factors can affect the safety of the procedure for you, including past pregnancies, Rh blood factor, family history of breast cancer, etc. If you are having a medical abortion, then any history of circulatory disorders or heart trouble is crucial. Will the clinic screen for STD's prior to the abortion? Studies have found that up to 27% of patients seeking abortions are infected with chlamydia and as many as 23% of those women will develop PID (pelvic inflammatory disease) within 4 weeks following an abortion.

**10. Understand that abortion is an unnatural medical intervention and carries inherent risks. Avoid any clinic that does not give you a complete discussion of your health risks.**

**Ectopic pregnancies.** Studies show that the risk of an ectopic pregnancy may be up to **twice** as high for women who have had one abortion, and increasingly high for women with two or more abortions.

**Premature delivery of subsequent babies.** A major study of more than 60,000 women in Denmark revealed that women who abort their first pregnancy are **twice** as likely than women who did not to have a preterm (premature) delivery of their second child.

**Breast cancer.** More than two dozen retrospective and prospective studies worldwide suggest that women who abort their first pregnancy face at least a 50% increased risk of developing breast cancer, a rate that grows with each successive abortion. One study found that teenagers under the age of 18 who abort at 8 weeks of pregnancy or later *may* face an **eight times greater risk** of contracting breast cancer by age 45.

**Psychological/emotional Trauma.** Up to 50% of post-abortive women report experiencing emotional and psychological disturbances ranging from feelings of grief, depression, and anger to fear of disclosure, preoccupation with babies, nightmares, sexual inhibition, termination of relationships, emotional coldness, increased alcohol use, and thoughts of suicide.

**11. You may demand your money back, should you change your mind, even when you're on the table.**

Problem Pregnancy has counseled women who have changed their minds at the last minute. If you are feeling uneasy about your decision or the location you have chosen, you have the right to leave—**at any time**.

**12. Understand your legal rights before and after your abortion.**

Some abortionists insist that patients sign a statement saying they will not hold the clinic or the doctor liable for damages in case of injury. However, this document has virtually no legal authority. If you are physically or emotionally injured by abortion, you always retain your constitutional right to seek financial compensation in a court of law, no matter what form(s) you signed.

**For help dial 1-888-310-7217.**

**13. Know what abortion is, and why it is such a difficult and painful decision.**

By 8 weeks, your fetus has tiny toes, fingers, ears. Sex was determined weeks ago: you have a boy or a girl! His or her heart is beating, and he or she responds to stimuli, including pain. Your fetus is in your body but he or she is not a part of your body. **You cannot make a free choice or a healthy choice if you are uninformed or in denial.** You are not a weak person who needs to be screened from the facts (including such basic human biology); you are a mother in need of honest help. We're here to help you make a decision you can live with, whatever the cost. Contact us with needs or questions.

## **Problem Pregnancy of Worcester, Inc.**

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### **Works cited:**

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- 10 Ney et al, "The Effects of pregnancy loss on women's health," *Soc. Sci. Med.* 48(9):1193-1200; Badgley, Caron and Powell, *Report of the Committee on Abortion Law, Supply and Services*, Ottawa, 1997, 319-321; "Study Links Abortion, Risk of Suicide," *Boston Globe* 12/6/96 page A13