

## Physical Risks

### Life-Threatening Risks of Abortion

#### Higher death risk, 6 times higher suicide

Compared to pregnant women who had their babies, pregnant women who aborted were ...

- **3.5 times more likely to die in the following year**
- **1.6 times more likely to die of natural causes**
- **6 times more likely to die of suicide**
- **14 times more likely to die from homicide**
- **4 times more likely to die of injuries related to accidents<sup>1</sup>**

Another study found that, compared to women who gave birth, women who had abortions had a 62% higher risk of death from all causes for at least *eight* years after their pregnancies. Deaths from suicides and accidents were most prominent, with deaths from suicides being 2.5 times higher.<sup>2</sup>

**Causes of death within a week** — The leading causes of abortion-related maternal deaths within a week of abortion are hemorrhage, infection, embolism, anesthesia complications, and undiagnosed ectopic pregnancies.<sup>3</sup>

**Cancer** — Significantly increased risk of breast cancer, cervical cancer, and lung cancer (probably due to heavier smoking patterns after abortion).<sup>4</sup>

**Immediate complications** — About 10% suffer immediate complications; one-fifth are life-threatening:<sup>5</sup>

- hemorrhage
- infection
- ripped or perforated uterus
- cervical injury
- embolism
- anesthesia complications
- convulsions
- chronic abdominal pain
- cervical injury
- endotoxic shock
- second-degree burns
- Rh sensitization

**31% suffer health complications**— A recent study published in a major medical journal found that 31% of American women surveyed who had undergone abortions had health complications.<sup>6</sup>

**80%-180% increase in doctor visits** — Based on health care sought before and after abortion. On average, there is an 80% increase in doctor visits and a 180% increase in doctor visits for psychosocial reasons after abortion.<sup>7</sup>

**Self-destructive lifestyles, spiraling health problems** — Increased risk of promiscuity, smoking, drug abuse, and eating disorders, which all put the woman at increased risk for other health problems.<sup>8</sup>

#### Infertility and life-threatening reproductive risks

Abortion can damage reproductive organs and cause long-term and sometimes permanent problems that can put future pregnancies at risk. Women who have abortions are more likely to experience ectopic pregnancies, infertility, hysterectomies, stillbirths, miscarriages, and premature births than women who have not had abortions.<sup>9</sup>

#### Teens Face Higher Risk, 6 Times More Likely to Attempt Suicide

**Teens 6 times more likely to attempt suicide**— Teenage girls are 6 times more likely to attempt suicide if they have had an abortion in the last 6 months than are teens who have not had an abortion.<sup>10</sup>

**Reproductive damage and other complications** — Compared to teens who give birth, teens who abort are generally at higher risk of immediate complications and long-term reproductive damage after abortion than are older women.<sup>11</sup>

continued ►

### **Higher risk of PID, 2.5 times higher risk of endometritis (a major cause of maternal death in future pregnancies)**

— Teens are at higher risk for dangerous infections such as pelvic inflammatory disease and endometritis after abortion. These infections increase their risk of infertility, hysterectomy, ectopic pregnancy, and other serious complications.<sup>12</sup>

## Overview of reproductive complications and problems with subsequent deliveries

**Pelvic Inflammatory Disease** — Abortion puts women at risk of Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) is a serious, life-threatening disease and a major direct cause of infertility. PID also increases risk of ectopic pregnancies. Studies have found that approximately one-fourth of women who have a chlamydia infection at the time of their abortion and 5% of women who don't have chlamydia will develop PID within four weeks after the abortion.<sup>13</sup>

**Placenta Previa** — After abortion, there is a seven- to 15-fold increase in placenta previa in subsequent pregnancies (a life-threatening condition for both the mother and her wanted pregnancy). Abnormal development of the placenta due to uterine damage increases the risk of birth defects, stillbirth, and excessive bleeding during labor.<sup>14</sup>

**Ectopic Pregnancy** — Post-abortive women have a significantly increased risk of subsequent ectopic pregnancies,<sup>15</sup> which are life threatening and may result in reduced fertility.

**Endometritis, a Major Cause of Death** — Abortion can result in for endometritis, which can lead to hospitalization and infertility problems. It is a major cause of maternal death during pregnancy.<sup>16</sup>

### **Women who abort twice as likely to have pre-term or post-term deliveries.**<sup>17</sup>

- Women who had one, two, or more previous induced abortions are, respectively, 1.89, 2.66, or 2.03 times more likely to have a subsequent pre-term delivery, compared to women who carry to term. Pre-term delivery increases the risk of neonatal death and handicaps. The average hospital charge from delivery to discharge for a premature birth is \$58,000, compared to \$4,300 for a full-term birth.
- Women who had one, two, or more induced abortions are, respectively, 1.89, 2.61, and 2.23 times more likely to have a post-term delivery (over 42 weeks).

**Death or disability of newborns in later pregnancies** — Cervical and uterine damage may increase the risk of premature delivery, complications of labor, and abnormal development of the placenta in later pregnancies.<sup>16</sup> These complications are the leading causes of disabilities among newborns.

## **AfterAbortion.org/news**

The Elliot Institute was involved in all of the studies listed above. For more information on this research, including citations and links to the published studies, visit [www.afterabortion.org/news](http://www.afterabortion.org/news).

## **Detrimental Effects -- Quick-Reference Summary of Available Research**

Additional research summaries are available in the book “Detrimental Effects of Abortion: An Annotated Bibliography with Commentary,” edited by Thomas W. Strahan. To order, call **Acorn Books: 1-888-412-2676**.

## **Citations for *Physical Risks of Abortion* Fact Sheet**

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