

# Teen Abortion Risks

## Fact Sheet

*“Parents are faced with a shell of a person and have no idea where they lost their child.”*

—Terri, who had a secret abortion as a teen

### Suicide attempts 6 times more likely

- **Teenagers are 6 times more likely to attempt suicide if they have had an abortion in the last six months** than are teens who have not had an abortion,<sup>1</sup> and four times more likely to commit suicide than adults who abort.<sup>2</sup> A history of abortion is likely to be associated with adolescent suicidal thinking.<sup>1</sup> Overall, women who have abortions have a 6 times higher rate of suicide compared to women who carry to term.<sup>3</sup>
- **Teens who abort are more likely to develop psychological problems,**<sup>4</sup> and are nearly three times more likely to be admitted to mental health hospitals than teens in general.<sup>5</sup>
- **About 40% of teen abortions take place with no parental involvement,**<sup>6</sup> leaving parents in the dark about subsequent emotional or physical problems and putting them at risk for further injury and death.<sup>7</sup>
- **Teens are 5 times more likely to seek subsequent help for psychological and emotional problems** compared to their peers who carry “unwanted pregnancies” to term.<sup>8</sup>
- **Teens are 3 times more likely to report subsequent trouble sleeping, and nine times more likely to report subsequent marijuana use after abortion.**<sup>8</sup>
- **Among studies comparing abortion vs. carrying to term, worse outcomes are associated with abortion,** even when the pregnancy is unplanned.<sup>8</sup>
- **Teens are more likely to abort because of pressure from their parents or partner.**<sup>9</sup> In one study, 64% of women who had undergone an abortion reported that they felt pressured by others to abort.<sup>10</sup>
- **Teens are more likely to report being misinformed in pre-abortion counseling.**<sup>11</sup>

### Acute Pain. Infertility. Risk of Death.

- **Acute pain.** Teens report more severe pain during the abortion procedure than do adult women.<sup>12</sup>
- **Lacerations up to twice as likely.** Teens are up to twice as likely to experience dangerous cervical lacerations during abortion compared to older women.<sup>13</sup>
- **Infertility and life-threatening complications.** Studies have found that teens are at higher risk for post-abortion infections such as pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and endometritis.<sup>14</sup> These infections increase their risk of infertility, hysterectomy, ectopic pregnancy, and other serious complications.<sup>15</sup>
- **Higher breast cancer risk.** An early full-term birth reduces breast cancer risk by as much as 1/3, while abortion of a first pregnancy carries a 30- to 50% increased risk of breast cancer.<sup>16</sup> More than 90% of those who abort at 17 or younger have not had a previous full-term pregnancy, compared to 78% of patients age 18-19 and 49% of abortion patients overall.<sup>17</sup>
- **Teens are more likely to have riskier late-term abortions.** According to the CDC, approximately 30% of abortions among teens take place at 13 weeks gestation or greater, compared to only 12% among women in general.<sup>18</sup> Late-term abortions are associated with more severe psychological problems,<sup>19</sup> higher risk of physical complications,<sup>20</sup> and problems in later pregnancies.<sup>21</sup>

### Grief, trauma and self-destructive outcomes

- **Teens who abort are twice as likely as their peers to abuse alcohol, marijuana, or cocaine.**<sup>22</sup>

continued ►

- \* **Teens have greater difficulty coping** after abortion,<sup>23</sup> leading to problems such as suicide, psychological problems, substance abuse, and difficulty in relationships.
- **Negative effects on relationships and parenting.** Teens who report “being particularly fond of children” do not do as well psychologically after an abortion.<sup>24</sup> Teens who have abortions often have later problems regarding sexuality and parenting.<sup>25</sup>
- **A lonely, traumatic experience.** The abortion procedure itself is considered by many teens to be stressful and associated with feelings of guilt, depression, and a sense of isolation.<sup>26</sup>
- **A nightmare that doesn’t end.** Teens are more likely to report severe nightmares and to score higher on scales measuring antisocial traits, paranoia, drug abuse, and psychotic delusions than are older abortion patients.<sup>27</sup>
- **Four times higher risk of repeat abortion.** Teens who abort are likely to become pregnant again within the next few years.<sup>28</sup> Among pregnant teens, those who had had an abortion were at least 4 times more likely to abort.<sup>29</sup>

## Citations

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