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Abortion and HIV

Last updated: November 7, 2024

Together, we can change the course of the HIV epidemic...one woman at a time.

#onewomanatatime

www.thewellproject.org

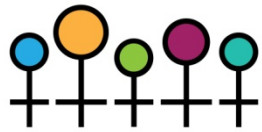
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What Is an Abortion?

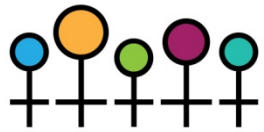
- Common medical procedure
- Intentional termination = induced (elective) abortion
 - First trimester: medication abortion
 - No need for healthcare provider
 - Later: procedural (surgical) abortion
 - Early: uterine (vacuum) aspiration
 - Later: D(ilation) & E(vacuation)
 - Performed by healthcare provider
- Miscarriage = spontaneous abortion



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Abortion Is Healthcare

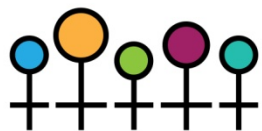
- Medical emergencies may require abortion
- Everyone has right to decide about their own body
 - Includes right to decide whether/when to have children
- Contraception to prevent pregnancy
 - Not always possible or may fail
- Sexual healthcare
 - HIV, other STIs
 - Cervical, anal cancer
 - Contraception, PrEP
 - Abortion care
 - Sexual dysfunction/pain
 - Menstruation/menopause
 - Gender-affirming care
 - Pregnancy



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Abortion Laws Affect Other Healthcare

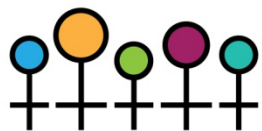
- Laws also restrict information about abortions
 - Punish healthcare providers for giving information
 - Providers leave restrictive states
 - Rural maternity wards close for lack of staff
- Defunding clinics stops HIV testing and prenatal care
- Global gag rule
 - No funding for global sexual health services that provide information about abortion
 - Reversed in 2021 by US President Biden
 - Could be reinstated by another president



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Women Living with HIV and Abortion

- Before effective HIV treatment
 - Women told to have abortions
 - Idea: prevent HIV transmission to fetus
- Current HIV treatment
 - Chances of transmission to fetus very low
 - Can have HIV-negative baby if choosing to have child
- Right to abortion independent of HIV status
 - Right is threatened in US and around the world



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Abortion Bans and Pregnancy Duration

- Providers calculate time since last period
 - Reason: people track their periods, but often don't know precisely when they conceived
- Ovulation 2-3 weeks after last period
 - People considered 2-3 weeks pregnant at conception
- Abortion laws based on provider calculation
 - 6-week abortion ban: period is only 1-2 weeks late
- Irregular periods common in people living with HIV
 - Person may not know they are pregnant when ban starts



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Law Versus Reality

- Pregnancy termination throughout history
 - Back then: herbal remedies, unsafe procedures
 - People die from unsafe abortions
 - Now: safe terminations possible
- When safe terminations no longer available ...
 - People will resort to unsafe practices
 - Need time to find underground network
 - Later-term abortions become more common
 - Need money for procedure and/or travel
 - Disproportionate impact on poor people



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If You Are Pregnant

- All health issues:
you decide about your body
- Living with HIV:
 - Safe ways to give birth or
 - Terminate pregnancy
- If right to choose restricted, see at right

National Organizations

- [Abortion Finder](#)
- [Planned Parenthood](#)
- [National Network of Abortion Funds](#)
- [National Abortion Hotline](#)
- [The Brigid Alliance](#)
- [National Abortion Federation](#)



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Learn More!

- To learn more about this topic, please read the full fact sheet:
 - [Abortion and HIV](#)
- For more fact sheets and to connect to our community of women living with HIV, visit:
 - www.thewellproject.org
 - www.facebook.com/thewellproject
 - www.x.com/thewellproject
 - www.instagram.com/thewellprojecthiv
 - www.youtube.com/thewellprojecthiv