



When you can have an abortion

An abortion is the medical process of ending a pregnancy. It's also known as a termination.

The pregnancy ends either by:

- taking medicine (Link: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/abortion/methods/medical/>)
- having a minor surgical procedure (Link: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/abortion/methods/surgical/>)

An abortion is free through the HSE if you live in the Republic of Ireland.

If you live outside the Republic of Ireland, you can have an abortion in the Republic of Ireland. But you will have to pay for it.

Having an abortion

You can have an abortion if your pregnancy is no more than 12 weeks.

12 weeks of pregnancy means 84 days since the first day of your last period.

After 12 weeks, you can only have an abortion in exceptional circumstances (Link: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/abortion/methods/after-12-weeks/>).

The earlier an abortion is carried out, the simpler and safer it will be.

Getting support early on will also give you more time to make a decision if you're unsure whether you want to have an abortion or not.

You can get free and confidential advice on all your options from My Options (Link: <https://www2.hse.ie/services/unplanned-pregnancy-support-services/my-options-freephone-line.html>). This is the HSE support service.

Call My Options on Freephone 1800 828 010 (Link: tel:1800828010). From outside the Republic of Ireland call 00353 59 916 5066 (Link: tel:00353599138175)

3-day wait

You can have an abortion up to 12 weeks (84 days) of pregnancy.

But you need to begin the process earlier than that.

This is so a GP or doctor can certify that you are no more than 12 weeks pregnant. There must be at least 3 days between being certified and having the abortion procedure. This is the law.

For example, if you are certified on a Monday, the earliest you can have an abortion is Thursday.

This delay of at least 3 days can give you time to decide if you want to go ahead with the abortion.

Deciding to have an abortion (Link: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/abortion/how-to-get/deciding/>)

Certification

You need to get 'certification' from a GP or doctor before you have an abortion. This is the law.

A GP or doctor needs to certify that you will be no more than 12 weeks pregnant at the time of the abortion. They will do this check during your pre-abortion consultation (Link: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/abortion/methods/before/>).

You should have this consultation to get certified as early as you can. This is because there may be a delay in certifying that you are no more than 12 weeks pregnant. This delay can happen if the GP or doctor needs to refer you for an ultrasound scan (Link: <https://www2.hse.ie/pregnancy-birth/scans-tests/ultrasound-scans/>).

There may be delays in getting an appointment with your GP or doctor. They may not be able to see you at short notice. This could delay an abortion.

⚠ Important

Not every GP or doctor offers abortion services.

Call the My Options team for information on GPs who provide abortion services in your area.

Freephone: 1800 828 010 (Link: [tel:1800 828 010](tel:1800828010))

Phone: 00 353 59 916 5066 (from outside of Ireland) (Link: [tel:00 353 59 916 5066](tel:00353599165066))

Working out how many weeks pregnant you are

The length of your pregnancy is the number of days since the first day of your last period.

9 weeks of pregnancy means 63 days since the first day of your last period.

12 weeks of pregnancy means 84 days since the first day of your last period.

If you're not sure how long you've been pregnant, you may need an ultrasound scan to check. Your GP or doctor can refer you.

Ultrasound scan

Your doctor may refer you for an ultrasound scan if:

- you do not know how many weeks pregnant you are
- your cycle is irregular
- your doctor is concerned about an ectopic pregnancy (Link: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/ectopic-pregnancy/>)

This will help you and your doctor decide which abortion method (Link:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/abortion/methods/types/#:~:text=There%20are%20two%20types%20of,procedure%20to%20remove%20the%20pregna> is best for you.

Where to go for an abortion (Link: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/abortion/how-to-get/where-to-go/>)

More in [How to get an abortion \(Link: /conditions/abortion/how-to-get/\)](/conditions/abortion/how-to-get/)

| [When you can have an abortion](#)

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[Where to go for an abortion \(Link: /conditions/abortion/how-to-get/where-to-go/\)](/conditions/abortion/how-to-get/where-to-go/)

[Hospitals providing abortion services \(Link: /conditions/abortion/how-to-get/in-hospital/\)](/conditions/abortion/how-to-get/in-hospital/)

[Risks of an abortion \(Link: /conditions/abortion/how-to-get/risks/\)](/conditions/abortion/how-to-get/risks/)

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