



## Family Policy Brief

# ABORTION

Every abortion destroys an innocent life—the life of the developing child—and has serious repercussions for the mother as well. If women were more informed regarding abortion, there would be far fewer of them. Legalizing abortion does not make it safe for the child.

***Abortion and Fetal Pain*** – Peer-reviewed scientific findings regarding early development of the child in the womb show that “All the essential components of anatomy, physiology, and neurobiology exist to transmit painful sensations from the skin to the spinal cord and to the brain.”<sup>1</sup> And they further indicate that “The highest density of pain receptors per square inch of skin in human development occurs in utero from twenty to thirty weeks of gestation,”<sup>2</sup> In light of these facts, it is unconscionable that the gruesome and painful procedures listed below are legal in many parts of the world.

### **Common, yet Inhumane and Cruel, Abortion Procedures<sup>3</sup>**

**Caution:** The following are very disturbing descriptions of what the “choice” to have an abortion often entails.

***Suction Aspiration (vacuum curettage):*** A suction tool with a sharp cutting edge is inserted through the cervix into the womb to dismember the baby’s body and tear the placenta from the wall of the uterus.

***Dilatation (Dilation) and Curettage (D&C):*** A loop-shaped knife is inserted through the cervix, cuts the baby into pieces, and then scrapes the placenta off the uterine wall.

***Dilatation (Dilation) and Evacuation (D&E):*** Used to abort unborn children as old as six months, forceps with sharp metal jaws inserted in the cervix are used to grasp parts of the baby, which are then twisted and torn away. Sometimes the baby’s skull must be compressed or crushed to facilitate removal. If not carefully removed, sharp edges of the bones can cause cervical laceration and profuse bleeding.

***Saline Amniocentesis (Salt Poisoning):*** Used after 16 weeks of pregnancy, amniotic fluid is withdrawn with a needle and replaced with a solution of concentrated salt. The baby is slowly poisoned by breathing in and swallowing the salt. The chemical solution causes painful burning and deterioration of the baby’s skin. The child usually dies within an hour, and the mother usually delivers a dead, burned and shriveled baby.

***Partial-Birth Abortion:*** Used to abort women who are five to nine months pregnant, the abortionist reaches into the uterus and grabs the unborn baby’s leg with forceps, pulling it into the birth canal. The head of the live baby is deliberately kept just inside the womb. The abortionist inserts scissors into the baby’s skull and spreads the tips of the scissors apart to enlarge the wound. A suction catheter is inserted into the skull, which suctions out the baby’s brains. The abortionist then pulls the baby he has just killed out of the birth canal.

***Hysterotomy:*** An incision is made in the mother’s abdomen, and the baby, placenta and amniotic sac are removed. Babies are sometimes born alive during this procedure, raising questions as to how and when these infants are killed and by whom.

## Serious Complications From Abortion

Approximately 10 percent of all *legal* abortions end with one or more of the following complications, and 20 percent of these complications are life threatening.

***Reported Physical Complications From Abortion:*** Accidental tearing of uterine artery, heavy bleeding requiring blood transfusions, abdominal cramping, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, infection, allergic reaction to drugs or anesthesia causing convulsions, heart attack, tearing of the cervix, scarring of the uterine wall, perforation of the uterus, damage to internal organs, breast cancer, miscarriage of future pregnancies, infertility, increased risk of subsequent tubal pregnancies, hepatitis, blood clots, embolisms, sterility, and death (it is estimated that 20 percent of maternal deaths are due to abortion).

***Reported Psychological Complications from Abortion:*** Guilt, anger, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, anniversary-grief, flashbacks of abortion, sexual dysfunction, relationship problems, convulsions, eating disorders, sleep disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, and memory repression.

***Important Statistics:*** Women who aborted in the year prior to their deaths were 60 percent more likely to die of natural causes, seven times more likely to commit suicide, four times more likely to have fatal accidents and 14 times more likely to die from homicide.

***International Consensus Against Abortion:*** The international community recognizes abortion as a serious violation of the rights of the unborn child. For example, the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child states: “*Whereas the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth.*” Other UN consensus documents, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, contain similar protections.

***Policy Implications:*** Humane societies protect their most vulnerable members, especially their unborn children who are the future of any society. While working to overturn laws that legalize abortion, pro-life advocates should work to establish:

- Laws that require doctors to inform mothers of all the potential physical and psychological complications of abortion
- Mandatory waiting periods for women contemplating abortion
- Laws requiring doctors to (i) inform mothers that their children may feel pain; and (ii) offer anesthesia for the children
- Restrictions on which trimester a child can be aborted
- Strict regulations for abortion clinics
- Bans on all partial birth abortions

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<sup>1</sup> Testimony of Dr. Kanwaljeet S. Anand, Nhem District of the U.S. District Court in California.

<sup>2</sup> Testimony of Dr. Kanwaljeet S. Anand before U.S. Federal Court, 2003,

<sup>3</sup> National Right to Life, [www.nlrc.org](http://www.nlrc.org).