

Is abortion illegal?

Section 312 of the Penal Code permits abortion when “the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant woman, or injury to the mental or physical health of the pregnant woman, greater than if the pregnancy was terminated.”

For Muslims, the National Fatwa Council permits abortion if:

- Fetus is under 120 days,
- Fetus is found to be seriously abnormal, and
- The pregnancy will endanger the mothers' life and for socio-economic reasons.

Unsafe Abortion Methods and Risks Involved in Unsafe Abortion

Unsafe abortion procedures may involve insertion of an object or substance into the uterus, ingestion of harmful substances and application of external force. Complications of unsafe abortion include excessive bleeding, uterine infections and tears in the cervix, reproductive tract infections and even death. Repeated unsafe abortions may cause scarring inside the uterus and blockage of the fallopian tubes, and may result in infertility.

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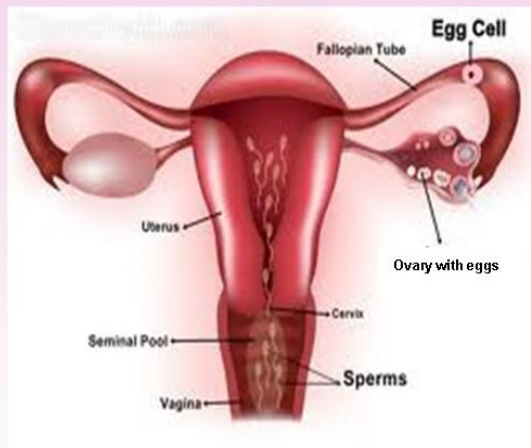
PREGNANCY



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How does pregnancy occur?

During sexual intercourse, the male's erect penis enters into the female's vagina. The male then ejaculates semen inside a female's vagina, as many as a hundred million sperm is deposited close to the cervix. The sperm swims up through the cervix into the uterus and into the fallopian tubes. If there is a female egg (ovum) in one of the tubes, the sperm clusters around it and one of the sperm joins the egg. This is called **fertilization**. The fertilized egg moves into the uterus and attaches itself to the wall of the uterus and develops into a foetus over a period of 36 weeks. This is called **pregnancy**.



Can pre-ejaculation cause pregnancy?

Pre-ejaculation refers to the act where the liquid oozes that out of the penis before ejaculation. Pre-ejaculation does not usually contain sperm but a small amount of sperm may be found. There is a risk of getting pregnant from pre-ejaculation, so **why take the risk?**

What if contraception has failed? Can an unwanted pregnancy be prevented?

A woman who is concerned about an unwanted pregnancy can consider the morning after pill, also known as emergency contraception pill (EC). EC is effective if taken within 120 hours/5 days after sexual intercourse. The sooner it is taken, the better. It is available in the pharmacies.

What are the signs of pregnancy?

The early signs of pregnancy include:

- Missed menstrual period
- Nausea
- Unusual tiredness
- Frequent urination
- Full or tender breasts
- Change appetite

To confirm the pregnancy, it is best to have a pregnancy test at clinic/ hospital.

What are the risks involved in teenage pregnancy?

Bearing a child before the age of 18 poses health risks for both young mother and child. Some of these health risks are:

Risks to Young Mother

- Maternal death
- Difficulty during delivery due to narrow pelvis

Risks to Foetus/Baby

- Premature birth
- Underweight baby
- Infant death
- Birth defects
- Anaemia
- Undernourished fetus

Can a girl/woman get pregnant if she has sexual intercourse for the first time?

Yes. Pregnancy is possible after the first sexual intercourse if the girl/women is fertile at the time of intercourse or if an ovum has been released from the ovary and is in the fallopian tube.

Can a girl/woman get pregnant if the male ejaculates in the area around the vagina opening?

Yes. There is a high possibility for a girl/woman to get pregnant if she is fertile when this happens. Semen can slip into the vagina and sperm can swim up to the fallopian tubes to fertilize the egg if it is present.

Am I ready to get pregnant?

Ask yourself these questions (especially if you are a teenager):

- Are you financially ready to have a child?
- Do you have a good support system when the baby comes?
- Do you and your partner both feel ready to raise a child?
- Are you willing to make the compromises/adjustments necessary to raise a child?
- Will this affect your education/ambition/career?

What is abortion?

Abortion is the expulsion of a developing fetus in the uterus before the fetus can survive outside woman's womb. This usually takes place before the 12th week of pregnancy. Abortion may occur spontaneously or may be induced.

Induced abortion: those terminated by deliberate action undertaken with the intention of terminating the pregnancy.

Spontaneous abortion: all other abortions, including external causes such as trauma or where a communicable disease is involved.