

Background

In Australia, one in four pregnant people will have a termination of pregnancy (abortion). The majority of these take place in early pregnancy. SA Health aims to provide easily accessible information about pregnancy options. The aim of this brochure is to help the pregnant person find information and services to support them in making their decisions regarding abortion.

The *Termination of Pregnancy Act 2021* allows both medical and surgical abortions in South Australia.

You can request an abortion without fear of any negative consequence. It is recognised that a pregnant person considers an abortion for many reasons including their age, family support, life circumstances, or for health issues.

SA Health has developed a state-wide policy outlining the management of abortion services for public health services in South Australia.

When should I access an abortion?

It is recommended that you contact an abortion provider as soon as possible when considering an abortion.

Do all health services/doctors provide abortion services?

No, not all services/doctors provide abortion services. Some doctors feel that performing an abortion conflicts with their own personal beliefs and values. This is called a conscientious objection. By law, they **MUST** promptly refer you to a known abortion service provider.

What will happen when I contact an abortion service / doctor?

You will be given an appointment with a health practitioner (doctor, nurse, midwife) so that a full health assessment and counselling can take place, and you can discuss your health needs.

The assessment visit will allow you to discuss the options available to you and help you work out the best course of treatment for you. At the appointment the health practitioner will be able to explain what you need to do if you choose to proceed with an abortion.

Can I access counselling to assist me?

Yes, all pregnant people seeking an abortion will be offered counselling.

Are there choices of procedure?

Yes, there are choices of procedure, but they depend on how long you have been pregnant, your personal circumstances and preferences and the services available where you live.

A medical abortion will occur by taking some oral medications. A surgical abortion requires a surgical procedure under anaesthetic in an operating room. The type of procedure you have will depend on how many weeks pregnant you are. All options, procedures and extra care requirements will be discussed with you at the assessment appointment.

Up to 22 weeks and 6 days you can request an abortion without stating your reasons. If you are more than 22 weeks and 6 days pregnant, an abortion can only be undertaken if your physical or mental health is at risk or there are fetal abnormalities. In this case, your doctor will need to consult with a second doctor to go ahead with the abortion.

An alternate referral and/or additional appointments may be required according to your decision.

Will I require any follow-up care after an abortion?

Routine follow-up is recommended after an abortion. There are different models of follow-up care, including self-directed. Follow-up care with your regular GP is recommended. Your ongoing needs will be discussed, and you will be given written information with directions for accessing medical care if required.

Where are the services?

You may be able to access an abortion at one of the several sites across South Australia providing this service, depending on your individual circumstances.

Counselling

It is required that counselling services are offered to all people seeking an abortion. Counselling is available through SA Health, regardless of where you access the abortion service.

Contact any of the following for information or to make an appointment:

> **The Pregnancy Advisory Centre**

Phone: (08) 7117 8999 or
SA Country Toll-free 1800 672 966

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/pregnancyadvisorycentre

> **Your General Practitioner (GP)**

> **Flinders Medical Centre**

Women's Health Clinic
Phone: (08) 8204 5197

> **Lyell McEwin Hospital**

Family Advisory Clinic
Phone: (08) 8282 1601

> **Noarlunga Hospital**

Family Advisory Clinic
Phone: (08) 8384 9233

> **SHINE SA**

Counselling service only
Phone: (08) 8300 5300

Confidentiality

- > SA Health assures your confidentiality when seeking an abortion
- > Health practitioners must protect the confidentiality of all clients consistent with current legislation. Health practitioners are very respectful of their clients' needs
- > If you are under 16 years of age, it is your choice whether to involve your parent or guardian in your decision to have an abortion. Your doctor will offer counselling to help support your decision

This client brochure provides an overview of the SA Health Termination of Pregnancy Policy, in line with the *Termination of Pregnancy Act 2021* and *Termination of Pregnancy Regulations 2022*

For more information

The SA Maternal, Neonatal and Gynaecology Community of Practice
Level 3, 77 King William Road
North Adelaide SA 5006
Telephone: 08 8161 9459
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au



www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons



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How do I access an abortion in SA?

Client Information
Brochure



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