

# What Are the Facts?

## *Frequently Asked at Justice For All Events*

**Note:** Justice For All staff and volunteers aim to create dialogue with members of the campus community about the issue of abortion. For us, dialogue is one key to solving the abortion controversy in our culture. Dialogue doesn't mean that we agree on everything, but it does mean that we seek to ask questions with an open heart, listen to understand those who disagree with us, and find common ground whenever possible. In seeking this sort of dialogue, we've found that members of the campus community regularly ask certain factual questions that are not fully addressed in the Justice For All Exhibit and Exhibit Brochure. The purpose of this document is to provide answers to those questions, using sources most people in the campus community respect, in order to make our dialogue about the moral and legal aspects of abortion more productive. If we can agree on a few facts, we believe this common ground can lead to finding other areas of agreement. We believe this will also illuminate the areas where we disagree, areas that need more discussion. If you're reading this page right now, why not ask a Justice For All staff person what he or she thinks about abortion? We guarantee that you will be pleasantly surprised at the dialogue that results. If you don't experience that sort of dialogue, please fill out a JFA response card and we'll do our best to make things right. —Stephen Wagner, Executive Director, Justice For All

### *1. How many abortions are performed in America?*

Source: Jones R.K. and Jerman J., "Abortion Incidence and Service Availability in the United States, 2014," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, March 2017, Table 1 ([www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/article\\_files/abortion-incidence-us.pdf](http://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/article_files/abortion-incidence-us.pdf), accessed March 28, 2017).

Length of Time	Number of Abortions Performed
Annual (USA)	Approximately 926,200
Daily*	Approximately 2,969
Since you started reading this piece of paper (10 seconds)*	Approximately 1

\* Note: These calculations are admittedly approximate. To calculate, we assumed that abortions are done 8 hours a day, 6 days a week, 52 weeks a year.

### *2. When in pregnancy is abortion legal?*

**Summary:** State and federal governments cannot outlaw abortion prior to the point when a fetus is "viable" (can survive outside of the womb). State and federal governments can make laws against abortion after viability if they include an exception for abortions necessary to protect a woman's "life" or "health." See [www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib\\_OAL.pdf](http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib_OAL.pdf) for current laws. **Source:** "...Roe's essential holding, the holding we reaffirm, has three parts. First is a recognition of the right of the woman to choose to have an abortion before viability and to obtain it without undue interference from the State. Before viability, the State's interests are not strong enough to support a prohibition of abortion or the imposition of a substantial obstacle to the woman's effective right to elect the procedure. Second is a confirmation of the State's power to restrict abortions after fetal viability, if the law contains exceptions for pregnancies which endanger a woman's life or health." (*Planned Parenthood v Casey*, 1992, [www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/91-744.ZO.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/91-744.ZO.html))

**What is "health"?** "Health" is defined so nebulously that virtually any reason for abortion after viability can fit the definition, making the exception the rule. **Source:** "We agree with the District Court, 319 F.Supp. at 1058, that the medical judgment may be exercised in the light of all factors – physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age – relevant to the wellbeing of the patient. All these factors may relate to health." (*Doe v. Bolton*, 1973, [www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC\\_CR\\_0410\\_0179\\_ZO.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0410_0179_ZO.html))

### *3. What's the origin of the abortion pictures on the Justice For All Exhibit?*

The pictures of aborted embryos and fetuses are used with the permission of the Center for Bio-Ethical Reform, the world's largest online library of aborted fetus and embryo photographs. According to CBR's website, the pictures were taken at "abortion clinics which perform elective pregnancy terminations." CBR warns that it is "preparing to take legal action against pro-abortion defendants who falsely accuse CBR of fraudulently altering pictures of aborted embryos and fetuses." CBR also possesses signed affidavits from a former abortion provider and from the photographer who took the pictures, attesting to the authenticity of the abortion photos and videos. **For more information**, see CBR's "Verifying Photograph Authenticity" page via the link at [www.JFAweb.org/Brochure-Updates](http://www.JFAweb.org/Brochure-Updates).

### *4. What do the ages on the Exhibit pictures mean?*

Embryologists date the embryo or fetus from the time of fertilization. In one method, they measure the length from the top of the embryo's head to its behind ("crown to rump" length). Physicians, on the other hand, typically date pregnancy from a woman's *last menstrual period* (LMP). A woman's LMP occurs approximately two weeks before fertilization. Like pregnancy, abortions are typically dated from LMP. To avoid confusion, Justice For All uses the standard dating system of embryologists and calculates the ages of the embryos and fetuses on the Exhibit from the time of fertilization using "crown to rump" length as a guide. JFA does not use LMP dates on any of the Exhibit photos. *Example:* A woman whose pregnancy is dated at 12 weeks LMP is carrying a 10-week fetus. Therefore, the picture of the 10-week aborted fetus on page 9 of the Exhibit Brochure was the result of a 12-week abortion procedure.

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## 5. When in pregnancy are abortions performed?

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Abortion Surveillance—United States, 2010," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 2013, Vol. 66, No. SS-08, Table 8. ([www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6208.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6208.pdf))

Period of Pregnancy (LMP)*	% of Abortions**	Est. Number, If Applied to 2014 Total (U.S.A.)
Before 9 Weeks	66.1%	612,218
Weeks 9-13	25.9%	239,886
Weeks 14-20	6.7%	62,055
After 20 Weeks	1.3%	12,041

\* Remember the dating of Exhibit pictures of embryos and fetuses is from conception/fertilization. Subtract two weeks from these numbers to correlate.

\*\* Note: Does not include data from 21 states and the District of Columbia. Among these are California, Florida, and New York, which together comprise about 38% of US abortions (see [www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/sfaa.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/sfaa.html)).

## 6. How are abortions performed?

Period of Pregnancy	Name of Procedure	Description and Source
Approximately 5-9 weeks LMP  (3-7 weeks post-fertilization)	Mifepristone and Misoprostol, also known as "RU-486," "the abortion pill," and "chemical abortion"	According to the National Abortion Federation, "Mifepristone blocks the progesterone receptor, leading to changes in the endometrial blood supply... The net effect of mifepristone [is] detachment of the trophoblast from the uterine decidua..." See <a href="http://www.prochoice.org/health-care-professionals/educational-resources">www.prochoice.org/health-care-professionals/educational-resources</a> and navigate to <i>Medical Abortion / History and Overview / Mechanism of Action</i> . (Note: The trophoblast is the part of the embryo that connects the embryo to the uterus. It becomes the embryonic/fetal part of the placenta.) In other words, mifepristone reduces blood flow between the embryo and the uterus, stopping nutrition from reaching the embryo. The embryo dies as a result.
Up to approximately 12 weeks LMP  (Up to approximately 10 weeks post-fertilization)	Vacuum aspiration, also known as "suction curettage" or "suction abortion"	"After dilation, a plastic tube about the diameter of a pencil is then inserted into the uterus through the enlarged cervix. The tube is attached to a pump which then suctions out the fetus, the placenta and other uterine contents. After the suctioning, the physician may find it necessary to use a curette (a sharp, spoon-like instrument) to gently scrape the walls of the uterus to make sure all the fragments of the fetus and placenta have been removed from the uterus." Source: Michigan Department of Community Health (Search for the "Suction Curettage" page at <a href="http://www.michigan.gov">www.michigan.gov</a> or find the page via the link at <a href="http://www.JFAweb.org/Brochure-Updates">www.JFAweb.org/Brochure-Updates</a> .)
Beyond approximately 12 weeks LMP  (Beyond approximately 10 weeks post-fertilization)	Dilation and Evacuation, or D&E	This procedure was described in the U.S. Supreme Court Case <i>Gonzales v Carhart</i> (2007). "The doctor, often guided by ultrasound, inserts grasping forceps through the woman's cervix and into the uterus to grab the fetus. The doctor grips a fetal part with the forceps and pulls it back through the cervix and vagina, continuing to pull even after meeting resistance from the cervix. The friction causes the fetus to tear apart. For example, a leg might be ripped off the fetus as it is pulled through the cervix and out of the woman. The process of evacuating the fetus piece by piece continues until it has been completely removed." ( <a href="http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/05-380.ZO.html">www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/05-380.ZO.html</a> , Section 1-A)

## 7. What reasons do women give for having abortions?

Source: Finer, et. al., "Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 2005, 37(3):110–118, Tables 2 and 3 ([www.guttmacher.org/pubs/psrh/full/3711005.pdf](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/psrh/full/3711005.pdf))

Reason	% of women in 2004 who said this reason contributed to their decision to have an abortion	% of women in 2004 who said this is the most important reason for their abortion
Having a baby would dramatically change my life	74	4
Can't afford a baby now	73	23
Don't want to be a single mother or having relationship problems	48	8
Have completed my childbearing	38	19
Not ready for a(nother) child	32	25
Don't want people to know I had sex or got pregnant	25	Less than .5
Don't feel mature enough to raise a(nother) child	22	7
Husband or partner wants me to have an abortion	14	Less than .5
Possible problems affecting the health of the fetus	13	3
Physical problem with my health	12	4
Parents want me to have an abortion	6	Less than .5
Was a victim of rape	1	Less than .5
Became pregnant as a result of incest	Less than .5	-
Other	-	6
Total	-	100