

# FAQ About Abortion Access in Utah

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## Summary:

On May 2, 2023, a Utah court blocked the implementation of HB 467, a new law called the "clinic ban" that would have functionally eliminated access to abortion in the state. As a result, abortion remains legal in Utah up to 18 weeks of pregnancy<sup>1</sup> and available at outpatient health centers like those run by Planned Parenthood Association of Utah (PPAU)."

This is the second time in a year that PPAU and the ACLU of Utah have successfully blocked a new abortion ban in Utah. Last July, PPAU and the ACLU stopped the "trigger ban" in the same court. While the legal process continues, both bans will be blocked from taking effect and abortion will remain legal and available in Utah up to 18 weeks of pregnancy.

Over the next few months, PPAU and the ACLU will argue in court that both the "trigger ban" and the "clinic ban" violate the Utah Constitution. As a result of the legal process, PPAU will have advance notice of pending changes to abortion access in Utah.

## Is abortion legal in Utah?

Yes. Abortion is legal in Utah up to 18 weeks of pregnancy and available at Planned Parenthood Association of Utah health centers. To make an appointment, call 1-800-230-PLAN or go to [www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-utah](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-utah).

## I thought the Utah Legislature banned abortion. How is it still legal?

The two abortion bans (the "trigger ban" and the "clinic ban") passed by the Utah Legislature in recent years have been temporarily blocked by the courts from taking effect until the constitutionality of these laws are fully considered by the judicial system. As a result, abortion access is legal in Utah up to 18 weeks of pregnancy and available at Planned Parenthood Association of Utah health centers.

## What happens next with the lawsuits?

Abortions up to 18 weeks of pregnancy remain legal in Utah while the two injunctions—or legal blocks—against the legislature's attempts to ban abortion in Utah remain in place. PPAU and the ACLU of Utah will continue to argue in court that both the "trigger ban" and the "clinic ban" violate the Utah Constitution. The next legal step will be when the Utah Supreme Court holds a hearing on August 8 regarding the state's challenge to the injunction blocking the "trigger ban." The Utah Supreme Court will issue a decision in the weeks or months that follow.

## Where can I get help paying for an abortion?

The Utah Abortion Fund provides confidential financial and logistical support (including travel costs and accommodation) for people seeking abortion care in states where it is legal. Follow the instructions on how to contact them at [www.utabortionfund.org](http://www.utabortionfund.org). For a list of national organizations that support people seeking abortion care, and for organizations located in other states, go to the National Abortion Fund at [www.abortionfunds.org](http://www.abortionfunds.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Abortion is also legal *after* 18 weeks of pregnancy in certain exceptional circumstances: if the abortion is necessary to avert the patient's death or substantial impairment of a major bodily function; or if two maternal fetal medicine physicians have diagnosed a fetal abnormality that is incompatible with life.

### **How much does an abortion cost?**

The cost of an abortion depends on many factors, including the location of the medical provider and the type of procedure. Generally, a clinic-based abortion will cost between \$500 and \$2,500. See the answer to **"Where can I get help paying for an abortion?"** for information on financial resources.

### **Does health insurance cover the cost of an abortion?**

In Utah, most abortions are not covered by private health insurance or Medicaid. Some private insurance policies will cover the cost of an abortion to protect the life or health of the pregnant person or in situations involving rape or incest. A smaller number of insurers will cover abortions based on fetal abnormalities. Utah Medicaid will pay for abortions only when the life of the pregnant person is threatened, or in cases of rape or incest. As a result, most abortions are not covered by health insurance and most people pay out-of-pocket for their care.

### **What is the difference between a medication abortion and procedural (or "surgical") abortion?**

There are two different ways to receive an abortion that are both safe and effective.

A **medication abortion, also called the "abortion pill,"** is a procedure that involves taking two different medications, mifepristone and misoprostol, to end a pregnancy. Mifepristone interrupts the pregnancy's attachment to the uterine lining by blocking the hormone progesterone. Misoprostol expels the pregnancy by producing heavy uterine cramping. Typically, the first medication (mifepristone) is given at a clinic. The second medication (misoprostol) is taken at home where the abortion is completed. You can take the abortion pill up to 11 weeks after the first day of your last period. If you're past 11 weeks, you may be able to get procedural or "in-clinic" abortion.

A **procedural or "in-clinic" abortion** (sometimes called "surgical" abortion) is a procedure using instruments and suction to end a pregnancy. There are different types of procedural abortions depending on how far along the pregnancy is. Suction abortion is used up to 14-16 weeks after the first day of the last period. Dilation and evacuation (D&E) abortions are performed for pregnancies after approximately 13 weeks of pregnancy. A procedural abortion is performed in a health care facility, such as PPAU's health centers, sometimes with sedation or pain medication.

### **Is abortion safe?**

Yes. Both in-clinic and medication abortions are very safe. In fact, abortion is one of the safest medical procedures in the world. Overall, about 1 in 4 women in the U.S. will have an abortion by the time they are 45 years old.

### **Disclaimer**

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