

**INFORMATION BROCHURE** 

# **Abortion**







This information brochure on abortion is provided by the Ministry of Health. It does not replace the detailed information and advice from your doctor, health professional or specialised service

Abortion, also known as a termination of pregnancy, is legal in Luxembourg under the Deliberate Pregnancy Termination Act (loi sur l'Interruption Volontaire de Grossesse (IVG)) of December 2014. This information brochure has been prepared by the Ministry of Health and the Directorate of Health, in cooperation with the Luxembourg Society of Gynaecology and Obstetrics (SLGO).

The purpose of this brochure is to inform the public about legal aspects on abortion in Luxembourg, abortion methods, required criteria to carry out an abortion, practical steps to undertake, as well as aid and support services available for women considering an abortion.

This brochure does not replace the detailed information and advice from your doctor, health professional or specialised service.

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# **DEFINITIONS**

# What are the different types of ending a pregnancy?

- A spontaneous abortion or miscarriage is a spontaneous ending of pregnancy that occurs naturally or accidentally (unintentionally, without intervention).
- An intentional ending for medical reasons that can be carried out
  if the health or life of the woman or the baby is at risk. Two doctors
  must certify that this is the case.
- An intentional (induced, deliberate) ending of pregnancy for non medical reasons is an abortion requested by a pregnant woman.
   There are two types: medical abortion (by intake of medicine) or surgical abortion (by a surgical intervention).

# WHAT IS THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON ABORTION IN THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG?

In Luxembourg the abortion Act was passed on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014, amending the Act of the 15<sup>th</sup> November 1978.

# The abortion Act aims:

- To respect the choice of women and minors (under 18 years of age), and to provide appropriate medical care, psychological counselling and support;
- To define the criteria and conditions under which abortions can be carried out;
- To address the issue of women travelling abroad for abortion or having illegal abortion.

According to human rights, the choice of a woman to have an abortion must be respected whatever her reasons are. Nobody has the right to influence the woman in her decision. Healthcare professionals must help and guide a pregnant woman considering abortion to go through the various steps of the abortion procedure.

The law on abortion in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is part of its general policy of promoting physical, emotional and sexual health for all, particularly in regards to protecting the health of pregnant women and children, providing education on safe and responsible sex, safe and effective use of contraception, protection against sexually transmitted infections, self-respect and respect for others.

In Luxembourg, you can have an abortion up to the end of the 12th week of ones pregnancy. In other words, before the end of the 14th week after the first day of your last menstrual period/14 weeks without a menstrual period (amenorrhoea in medical terms).



#### **■** IMPORTANT NOTE

After this period, an abortion can be performed only in case of serious fetal illness or in case of serious maternal risk attested by two independent doctors (page 7).

## 2 Who can request an abortion?

The Act allows all pregnant women, including minors under the age of 18 to request an abortion by a licensed practitioner.

Specific provisions for minors (under 18)

# 2 1 Emancipated minors (no longer subject to parental authority)

The law does not differentiate between emancipated minors under 18 and women of legal age. The provisions are identical.

Under Luxembourg law, emancipated minors are no longer under the authority of their parents legal representative. Emancipated minors are able, like those of legal age, to engage in all activities of civil life. A minor can be emancipated by court order or through marriage (in accordance with Luxembourg law).

#### 2 \_ 2 Unemancipated minors

Unemancipated minors (are minors under 18 who are still subject to parental authority) can ask for an abortion. They must obtain the consent of a parent or their legal representative.

Everybody has the right to confidentiality. If you are a minor and you do not want to tell your parents or legal representatives about your abortion plans, you must have a trusted adult of your choice with you at all times during the procedure. The psychological counselling and support services can provide advice to minors on choosing such a person.

If you are a minor, you must attend a psychosocial support service. After the psychosocial consultation, unemancipated minors must confirm their decision to have an abortion in writing.

# 3 \_ Who can perform an abortion?

Voluntary interruption of a pregnancy **by medication** can be carried out by a doctor licensed to practice in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The doctor does not have to be a gynaecologist or an obstetrician. Medical abortions can also be carried out in the 3 family planning centres.

**Surgical abortions** are performed by a gynaecologist or an obstetrician licensed to practice in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

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#### Contact:

#### Planning Familial

Luxembourg: +352 48 59 76 | Esch-Alzette: +352 54 51 51 | Ettelbruck: +352 81 87 87 See page 29.

The procedure is carried out in a centre authorized by the Ministry of Health, in a doctor's office or in a hospital.

# 5 \_ Is a psychosocial counselling obligatory?

Only unemancipated minors are required by law to attend a psychosocial support consultation.

Other women are offered counselling and support, if they want it.

This consultation is offered in hospitals or at Planning familial (family planning) centres. It aims to accompany the woman in her choice and provides:

- information on the rights, assistance and support available for families under Luxembourg's law,
- assistance and advice on how to access counselling and support services if you are experiencing psychological or social problems/distress.

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Surgical abortion is performed by a doctor specialist in gynecology and obstetrics authorized to practice in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Chapter III

# **ABORTION METHODS**

The method chosen to terminate a pregnancy is decided during the appointment with your doctor. The decision is made based on a medical examination, the term of the pregnancy, which is determined by an ultrasound, and on any existing medical conditions and any treatments or medications you may be taking.

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#### THERE ARE TWO ABORTION METHODS:

#### 1 Medical abortions

**Taking medication to end the pregnancy,** which is only possible in early stages of the pregnancy

#### Surgical abortion:

This method is carried out if you are further along in your pregnancy.

The procedure involves either suction termination or, if necessary, dilation and curettage (D&C), preferably in a hospital under anaesthetic.

A medical abortion is a non-invasive method of terminating the pregnancy by taking two different pills.

Medical abortion can be carried out until 7 weeks of pregnancy, 9 weeks after the beginning of the last menstrual period (menstruation, menses).

It can be carried out in a private office of a doctor who has an agreement with a hospital, that has to be linked with a department an Obstetrics and Gynaecology and a round-the-clock emergency department, or at a Planning Familial centre.

You will need to attend the doctor's office or centre two to three times in a two-week period.

#### 1\_1 First medicine: Mifégyne® (Mifepriston)

The first pill you take is Mifégyne® (Mifepriston). This is an artificial hormone that stops the pregnancy from developing, stops the embryo from growing and helps the cervix to open.

You take the Mifegyne pregnancy termination pill under medical supervision during your visit by the doctor.

You return home after taking the tablet.

You will experience bleeding that is similar to a light or heavy menstrual period as the embryo is removed. This generally lasts during 7 to 12 days. Some women will have vaginal bleeding on the same day they take the Mifegyne pill.

# Good to know

Mifégyne® is not sold in pharmacies. It is only dispensed directly to doctors authorised to perform abortion.

#### 1 \_ 2 The second medicine: **Cytotec**® (Misoprostol)

The second pill, Cytotec® (Misoprostol) removes the embryo naturally.

36 to 48 hours after the taking in of the Mifegyne®, a second pill called Cytotec® is required. Cytotec® could be taken at home according to the doctor's instructions.

It causes the uterus to contract and remove the embryo naturally, usually within 2 to 6 hours after taking the medication. However, it can also take longer and may not happen until the evening or the next day. You might experience pain and bleeding, which can vary from mild to more severe. If the embryo is not removed, an additional doses of Cytotec® will be administrated. In rare cases, a minor operation, called "curettage", may be necessary to remove the embryo.

During your appointment for a medical abortion, your doctor will give you detailed instructions on how to take the pills and what to do if you encounter any problem.

# IMPORTANT

It is important to take the pills exactly as you are instructed by your doctor, especially when taking Cytotec at home.

If you develop severe pain and/or heavy bleeding, contact your doctor or the emergency services immediately.

Consider, if possible, the support of someone you trust for accompaniment and observation.

#### **IMPORTANT NOTE**

The pill Mifégyne is not the same as the "morning after pill".

The morning after pill works by delaying ovulation or the fertilisation of the egg. It does not terminate the pregnancy if you are already pregnant.

The morning after pill is an emergency contraceptive. It should be taken as soon as possible (within 72 hours or 120 hours according to the used morning-after pill) after unprotected sex to prevent prequancy. It should not be used as your regular contraception method.

Two types of morning after pill are available free of charge in Family Planning centres in Luxembourg. They are also sold over the counter (without prescription) in pharmacies. For more information, contact your gynaecologist or your Family Planning centre.

## 2 \_ Surgical abortion

A surgical abortion involves having an operation during a short hospital stay. It can be carried out up to the 12<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy, or 14 weeks after the first day of your last menstrual period.

Surgical abortion consists of a vacuum or suction aspiration, possibly curettage of the uterine cavity. It is performed under local anesthesia of the cervix (general anesthesia is however possible).

Vacuum aspiration takes around 15 to 20 minutes (including anesthesia, cervical dilatation and aspiration) plus the time for pre-medication and post-intervention monitoring.

## 3 \_ Possible complications after an abortion

Complications after an abortion are rare but they can happen.

If you develop any of the following signs or symptoms, contact your gynaecologist or the hospital immediately:

- considerable loss of blood.
- pain,
- discomfort.
- fever.

## 4 Does abortion always work?

Generally speaking, both abortion methods are effective. However, to make sure that the pregnancy has been terminated and the embryo removed, you should consider a post abortion follow-up apportionment.

# IMPORTANT NOTE

- Bleeding is not a sign that the pregnancy is terminated.
- Do not miss your follow-up appointment under any circumstances.
- If you experience complications, contact your doctor or the hospital immediately.

If you experience complications, contact your doctor or the hospital immediately

# ABORTION: THE STEPS TO FOLLOW

In order to carry out an abortion it is good to know that you will need several appointments with your doctor.

# 1\_ The first appointment with your gynaecologist

#### The doctor will give you:

- a letter certifying that you are pregnant, stating the foetus's position and exact term;
- medical information about the different abortion methods, their risks and side effects:
- a list of hospitals and centres licensed to carry out an abortion;
- this information brochure.

#### Before an abortion, the doctor:

- carries out a medical examination;
- takes your medical history, including any illnesses, any medication you are taking and your gynaecological history;
- gives you a prescription for blood tests (remember to bring your blood group card if you have one).

The law foresees a waiting period of 3 days between the first

consultation and the abortion appointment.

## 2 \_ Appointment for carrying out the abortion

If you are having **an abortion by medication**, you will be given the abortion pill during this appointment. The first pill, Mifegyne, stops the pregnancy. You take this with the doctor present. The second pill, Cytotec, causes the embryo to be removed. This pill can be taken at home 36 to 48 hours after the first one.

For a surgical abortion, you will spend a short time in hospital. The procedure involves abortion by either suction or curettage in the operating theatre.

# 3 \_ After the abortion: follow-up appointment

The follow-up appointment is very important so that your doctor can:

- check your general health;
- check that the abortion was successful and that the embryo has been completely removed;
- make sure you have no complications;
- talk to you about the best contraception methods.

The follow-up appointment after a abortion by medication takes place between 14 and 21 days after taking the first abortion pill Mifegyne®. If the abortion did not work (you are still pregnant or the embryo was not completely removed), you must have a surgical abortion.

To check that the abortion is complete, the doctor will carry out a physical examination, often followed by an ultrasound or a blood test (BHCG).

#### Good to know

Safe and responsible sex is one of the educational priorities of the Luxembourg Ministry of Health. Our policies include measures such as:

- providing access to contraception for young women under 30 (reimbursement of up to 80% of the cost of some contraceptives. It is being considerd to expand this offer.):
- the morning after pill, an emergency contraceptive, is available free of charge at Family Planning centres and can also be purchased in pharmacies without prescription;
- abortion available to all pregnant women, in accordance with the law.

# 4 Counselling

Unemancipated minors are required by law to have a psychosocial consultation. This consultation is also available to women who are of legal age if they wish to have it.

Psychosocial consultations are provided by the counselling and support services in hospitals that provide abortion or in Family Planning centres.

- Social workers, counsellors and psychologists are available to offer help and support as you make your decision and to provide information on the assistance that is available and the alternatives to an abortion.
- If you are unemancipated minor (aged under 18), you are not forced to participate in an interview with the counsellor nor make your decision immediately afterwards. After the psychosocial consultation, you will be given a letter confirming that you attended your consultation. You should give this letter to your gynaecologist or doctor, who has an agreement with a hospital.

Chapter V

# YOUR PRACTICAL QUESTIONS ANSWERED

# 1 \_ May women from abroad also apply for abortion in Luxembourg?

Women resident in Luxembourg or cross-border workers, who are members of the social security system in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg can seek for abortion. Women who are not members of the Luxembourg social security system will be referred to the appropriate services by their health professionals.

# 20 2 Can a doctor refuse to perform an abortion?

Article 13 of the Luxembourg Act states that no doctor will be obliged to carry out an abortion and no health professional will be obliged to attend an abortion session.

A woman's doctor can refuse to carry out an abortion. You should know that a doctor has the right to refuse to perform an abortion, but he has the obligation to provide information on the hospitals and centres that carry out abortion.

The procedure is protected by doctor-patient confidentiality, just like any other medical record

## 3 \_ Is confidentiality guaranteed?

Abortion is a confidential medical procedure. It is protected by doctor-patient confidentiality, just like any other medical record.

Medical information gathering in order to compile public health statistics is strictly anonymous and relies on the consent of the concerned person (See the Law of the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2002, as amended, on the Protection of Persons with regard to the Processing of Personal Data).

#### 4 Where are abortions carried out?

- Medical abortions are carried out either in a hospital, a Family Planning centre or in the private office of a doctor who has an agreement with a hospital with an Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department and a round-the-clock emergency department. The hospital must be licensed by the Ministry of Health.
- Surgical abortions are only performed in hospitals or in any other facility licensed for this procedure by Ministerial Order.
- Women can go to the gynaecologist and hospital of their choice.

# 5 \_ Who pays for an abortion?

Expenses relating to abortion are covered by social security, according to the existing tarification.

# HELP AND SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

#### 1 Birth allowance

In Luxembourg, the birth allowance is a payment aimed at preventing health problems for mother and baby related to pregnancy and birth and reducing infant mortality. The birth allowance is paid to women who have undergone proper surveillance and monitoring during pregnancy and birth, and have had their child monitored up to the age of two years, by means of compulsory medical examinations, with medical certificates as proof.

# The birth allowance is paid in three parts:

- prenatal allowance;
- birth allowance:
- postnatal allowance.

It comes up to a total of  $\le$ 1,740.09 and is paid on request in three equal payments of  $\le$ 580.03.

You will find the eligibility conditions and how to apply for the birth allowance on the family benefits site, Zukunftskeess - Caisse pour l'avenir des enfants (www.cae.lu) (in French and German).

#### 2 Allowance for the future of children

The child benefit payment is known as the allowance for the future of children and is paid from the first month after birth until the child is aged 18.

The benefit is paid until age 25 for young people in education as their main activity, including secondary, vocational education, specialist education, apprenticeship, additional or preparatory qualifications.

This benefit is currently €265 per month per child.

You will find the eligibility conditions and how to apply for the birth allowance on the family benefits site, Zukunftskeess - Caisse pour l'avenir des enfants (www.cae.lu) (in French and German).

# 3 \_ Counselling services for minors

The Kanner-Jugendtelefon (KJT, children's and young persons' helpline) is a telephone service for children and young people. They can contact the helpline by phone while remaining anonymous or in writing through the form on the website. The service is staffed by volunteers.

KJT is a listening and guidance service. The volunteers do not intervene in the situations they are told about. It is up to the caller, or user, to decide what steps he or she wishes to take after contacting KJT. The KJT staff will support him or her to find the best solution for the situation and their options. If necessary, they will direct the person to the appropriate services.

Contact:

Kanner-Jugendtelefon (KJT)

Tel. +352 1 1 6 1 1 1 www.kjt.lu

### 4 \_ Services for mothers aged under 18

The Zoé Group is a residence for pregnant teenagers and young mothers

Its mission is to offer 24-hour help and support for young women and their babies by providing a place to live, help with their education and psychological support.

When the stay in the **Zoé Group** ends, a follow-up of the mother, who has reached the age of 18 years, and of the child, is guaranteed during the first few months after the departure by the **Zoé Group** or by an external team.



#### Contact:

# Norbert Ensch Reception Centre - Zoé Group

9, Kréintgeshaff, L-5324 Contern

Tel. +352 27 55-6670 Fax +352 27 55-6661 mekr.zoe@croix-rouge.lu www.croix-rouge.lu/groupe-zoe/

www.kjt.lu

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Birth allowance
is a payment
aimed at preventing
health problems
for mother and baby
related to pregnancy
and birth

# LIST OF SERVICES AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES, INCLUDING ADVICE, TRAINING, COUNSELLING, MEDIATION, RECEPTION CENTRES AND SUPPORT

# Centre de Planning Familial et d'Éducation Sexuelle et Affective

#### SERVICE: Planning Familial

#### Luxembourg

Centre Dr M.-P. Molitor-Peffer

6, rue de la Fonderie, L- 1531 Luxembourg

Tel. 48 59 76 info@pfl.lu

Fax 40 02 14 www.planningfamilial.lu

#### Esch-sur-Alzette

Centre Mercure

2-4, rue Ernie Reitz, L-4151 Esch-sur-Alzette

**Tel.** 54 51 51 esch@pfl.lu

Fax 53 15 69 www.planningfamilial.lu

#### Ettelbrück

18, avenue J.F. Kennedy, L-9053 Ettelbrück

Tel. 81 87 87 ettelbruck@pfl.lu

Fax 81 10 16 www.planningfamilial.lu

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#### AFP - Solidarité-Famille a.s.b.l.

SERVICE: Erzéiongs - «a Familljeberodung»

39, boulevard Grande-Duchesse Charlotte, L-1331 Luxembourg

Tel. 46 00 04 – 31 info@afp-solidarite-famille.lu

Fax 47 00 59 www.afp-services.lu

#### Consultation et Préparation Familiale a.s.b.l.

SERVICE: Familljen-Center

4, rue G.C. Marshall, L-2181 Luxembourg

Tel. 47 45 44 info@familljen-center.lu
Fax 22 22 06 www.familljen-center.lu

#### Stiftung Kannerschlass

SERVICE: Elternschule Janusz Korczak

12, rue Winston Churchill, L- 4434 Soleuvre

Tel. 59 59 59 - 59 eltereschoul@kannerschlass.lu

Fax 59 47 13 www.kannerschlass.lu

#### Stiftung Pro Familia

SERVICE: Zentrum für Familienberatung und Mediation

5, route de Zoufftgen, L-3598 Dudelange

**Tel.** 51 72 72 - 31 ccmf@profamilia.lu **Fax** 52 21 88 www.profamilia.lu

#### Initiativ Liewensufank a.s.b.l.

#### SERVICE: Initiativ Liewensufank 20, rue de Contern, L- 5955 Itzig

Tel. 36 05 97 12 info@liewensufank.lu Fax 36 61 34 www.liewensufank.lu

#### Femmes en Détresse a.s.b.l.

SERVICE: Oxygène

2, rue du Fort Wallis, L-2714 Luxembourg

**Tel.** 49 41 49 infofilles@pt.lu **Fax** 27 12 59 89 www.fed.lu

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#### Fondation Maison de la Porte Ouverte

SERVICE: Centre Ozanam 64

64, rue Michel Welter, L-2730 Luxembourg

Tel. 48 83 47 ozanam@fmpo.lu

EINRICHTUNG: Centre Ozanam Nord

49, Grand-Rue, L-9530 Wiltz

Tel. 26953959 ozanam.nord@fmpo.lu

www.fmpo.lu

#### Chapter VIII

# LIST OF APPROVED CENTERS FOR ABORTIONS

#### Approved centres

#### **Planning Familial**

#### Luxemboura

Planning familial - Centre Dr M.-P. Molitor-Peffer

6-10, rue de la Fonderie, L-1531 Luxembourg

Tel. +352 48 59 76 www.planningfamilial.lu

#### Esch-sur-Alzette

#### Planning familial - Centre Mercure

2-4, rue Ernie Reitz, L-4151 Esch-sur-Alzette

Tel. +352 54 51 51 www.planningfamilial.le

#### Ettelbriick

#### Planning familial

18, avenue J.F. Kennedy, L-9053 Ettelbruck

Tel. +352 81 87 87 www.planningfamilial.lu

### Approved hospitals

#### Luxemburg

#### Centre Hospitalier de Luxembourg

4, rue Barblé, L-1210 Luxembourg

Tel. +352 44 11 11 www.chl

#### Maternité Grande-Duchesse Charlotte

120, route d'Arlon, L-1150 Luxembourg

Tel. +352 44 11 32 02 www.chl.lu/maternite

#### Centre Hospitalier du Kirchberg

5, rue Edward Steichen, L-2540 Luxembourg

Tel. +352 26333-1 www.chk.lu

#### Esch-sur-Alzette

#### Centre Hospitalier Emile Mayrisch

Rue Emile Mayrisch, L-4240 Esch-sur-Alzette

Tel. +352 5711-1 www.chem.lu

#### Ettelbriick

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#### Centre Hospitalier du Nord

120, avenue Salentiny, L-9080 Ettelbruck

Tel. +352 8166-1 www.chdn.lu

#### Chapter IX

# HYPERLINKS TO VARIOUS FORMS AND INFORMATION



Pregnancy certificate for an adult woman

Pregnancy certificate for an under aged woman (minor or not emancipated minor)

Request form for an abortion for an under aged woman (minor or not emancipated minor)

Psychosocial counseling and assistance certificate for under aged woman (minor or not emancipated minor)

Arrangement between a doctor and a hospital with a gynecology-obstetrics service which provides a permanent emergency service





