PREGNANCY OPTIONS

If you have confirmed that you or your partner is pregnant, there are three basic choices:

- Continue the pregnancy and become a parent
- Continue the pregnancy and arrange for an adoption, either within your family or through an agency.
- End the pregnancy by having an abortion

Ideally, both individuals responsible for the pregnancy are able to support each other and share in the decision-making. Ultimately, however, it is up to the pregnant person to make the choice that feels best for them. Different choices fit for different people at different times in their lives. Everybody is unique.

It is important to be aware of all the options available, so that you are able to make an informed choice. We offer pregnancy options counselling appointments, in which one of our nurses or doctors will review all the options with you (and a partner, if desired). They will ask guided questions to help you clarify your thoughts and feelings and will inform you of resources that are available to support you in whatever choice you make. They will answer any questions you have and help connect you with the appropriate people as you move forward with your choice.

Our nurses and doctors will not put any pressure on you to make a particular choice. They are simply a source of knowledge and emotional support, and are here to help you make the choice that feels best to you.

http://hshc.ca/pregnancy-options/
PARENTING

Parenthood is a life-long commitment – you become responsible for the care and upbringing of a child. Becoming a parent may fit in with your goals, or it may interfere with your future plans. Parenting can involve both joys and challenges. It can also lead to dramatic lifestyle changes. Work, school, and social schedules need to be adapted and it’s important to have financial and social supports in place.

Sometimes people raise a child with a partner and sometimes people raise a child on their own. Pregnancies and children can change relationships – for better or for worse. Pregnancy can bring partners closer together, but it won’t fix problems in a relationship. Relationships are more likely to last if they are strong and healthy before a pregnancy. Talk to others who are parents to find out about their experience.

If you’re continuing the pregnancy, be sure to see a doctor for pre-natal care, maintain a healthy diet, and avoid drugs, alcohol, and smoking.

Here are some questions to consider when thinking about becoming a parent. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. They are just ideas for you to think about:

- Do you feel ready to take on the tasks of being a parent?
- Do you have people who will help you?
- Do you want a child more than you want anything else?
- If you are in a relationship, does the other person want to be a parent?
- Do you think you are too young or too old to have a baby?
- Do you believe you can manage this by yourself?
- Do you have enough money to meet a child’s needs?
- Will having a child now stop you from having the life you want for yourself?
- If you have other children, will having another child cause problems for them?

ADOPTION

With an adoption, a person continues a pregnancy, gives birth, and then places the child with someone else to raise. The birth parent signs legal papers to give custody to someone else. These papers are signed after the baby is born, so the birth parent can change their mind about her decision up to the time when the custody papers are signed.

Adoptions can be arranged through the Department of Community Services or through private agencies. You can place a child with someone you know (e.g. a family member or a
friend) or with someone you don't know. A person can decide to choose adoption at any point during the pregnancy or immediately after the baby is born. The earlier an adoption decision is made, the more time a person has to make arrangements and prepare for the adoption.

Here are some questions to consider when you are thinking about arranging an adoption. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. They are just ideas for you to think about:

- Do you think you could continue the pregnancy and give birth, without having to raise the child?
- Do you think you could help the child have parents who can love and care for him/her?
- Could you postpone being a parent until later in your life when you feel ready?
- Do you like the idea of giving someone else a baby they are unable to have themselves?
- Would your family rather have the baby stay in the family than be raised by strangers?
- Do you think you could place the baby with someone else after nine months of pregnancy and delivery?
- Are you okay with the idea of someone else caring for your child?
- Would you be okay with or without contact with the child in the future?
- Would you worry about whether the baby was being well-treated?

ABORTION

What is abortion?

Abortion is a safe, legal, medical procedure that ends a pregnancy. People may also refer to an abortion as a “termination”, a “TA (therapeutic abortion)”, or simply a “procedure.”

There are two kinds of abortions: medical and surgical. Medical abortions involve either the drugs methotrexate and misoprostal or the use of the drug Mifegymiso. Surgical abortions are performed at hospitals and in private clinics.

The Halifax Sexual Health Centre is aware that Mifegymiso is available in Nova Scotia and funded by MSI for Nova Scotian health card holders as of November 1st, 2017.

Currently, Mifegymiso is not a service option at HSHC.

As of February 5th, 2018, individuals in Nova Scotia can self-refer for an abortion. That is, you do not require a physician referral to schedule an abortion.

If you would like to schedule an abortion or are interested in learning more about your options (i.e., medical versus surgical) call (toll free) 1-833-352-0719. Staff are available
8:00am to 4:00pm Monday through Friday. You may leave a voicemail after hours and someone will return your call.

People choose abortion for a variety of reasons. In general, people choose abortion because being pregnant at a particular time is not right for them. An abortion is still an abortion whether it is happening because a fetus has an abnormality, there has been a fetal demise, or simply because a pregnancy is not wanted. Having an abortion does not affect a person's ability to get pregnant in the future.

If you are thinking about having an abortion, here are some questions to consider. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. They are just ideas for you to think about:

- Would you like to postpone being a parent until you are able to provide for a child (e.g. are older, finished school, more financially secure, in a stable relationship)?
- How do you feel about the idea of being a single parent if the other person is unable or unwilling to raise a child?
- Are your religious or spiritual beliefs against abortion?
- Are you afraid you might not be able to get pregnant again?
- Does your family or someone else who is important to you oppose abortion?
- Do you have a valid health card or enough money to pay for an abortion?

At our clinic, our patients are here for a variety of reasons, from STI testing and birth control prescriptions to hormone replacement therapy. No one will know if you are here for an abortion referral.

**Who can have an abortion?**

Currently in Nova Scotia, any person who is up to the 15th week of pregnancy can have a surgical abortion. There is no age restriction and you do not need parental consent. After a pregnancy is 15 weeks and 6 days along, a person may be able to go out of province to have an abortion, as the cut-off date is different from province to province. You can access a complete list of clinics in Canada and their policies [here](http://hshc.ca/pregnancy-options/).

**What if I'm not from Halifax?**

If you live outside of the HRM area, the staff at the toll free line **1-833-352-0719** will arrange for local blood work and ultrasound appointments to the best of their abilities.

**What if I don't have a support person?**

If you do not have a support person to help you through your decision to have an abortion or to take you to and from the hospital and other appointments, Nova Scotia is home to the Abortion Support Service Atlantic. They are best reached by [Facebook](http://hshc.ca/pregnancy-options/). They can arrange for you to have your own abortion doula to drive you and support you emotionally.
Who can do an abortion referral?

Nova Scotia no longer requires a doctor’s referral for an abortion. You can self-refer by calling the Termination of Pregnancy Unit toll free at 1-833-352-0719.

What is the process like?

Typically, an abortion takes four steps. You can cancel your referral process at any time. A support person can be with you during most of the process.

1) **Self-referral phone call:** Call 1-833-352-0719 to talk with staff at the Termination of Pregnancy Unit to discuss options and do a medical intake over the phone. They may ask for the date of the first day of your last menstrual period. They will ask for your contact and health card information.

2) **Blood work:** This test is meant to confirm the pregnancy.

3) **Ultrasound:** An ultrasound is necessary to date the pregnancy for the doctor performing the abortion. This usually takes 30 minutes.

4) **Abortion:** The surgical procedure will be performed at a Termination of Pregnancy Unit (TPU). You may be in the hospital for 4 to 6 hours. You are not put to sleep. You have the option of having an IUD inserted as a form of birth control at the same time as your procedure. Someone must be there to pick you up after your procedure (i.e. not a cab).

5) **Aftercare:** You can get a medical note for time off work during this process. A post abortion exam is not mandatory, but is an option if you’re interested in a follow up appointment. A post abortion exam is not a physical exam.

How much does it cost?

In Nova Scotia, abortions performed in the hospital are free if the person has a valid Canadian health card (although people from provinces outside of Nova Scotia may have to pay up front and be reimbursed). To have a private clinic abortion, a person doesn’t need a doctor’s referral, but they must pay for the procedure.

For a Canadian with no health coverage, the whole abortion process can cost up to $1724.24. For a non-Canadian citizen, it can cost up to $1955.74. Some private insurance will reimburse you, but you should check your plan. An admin can help you understand the breakdown of costs over the phone.

What are my other options?

Our doctors and nurses can go over the choices between abortion, adoption, and keeping a pregnancy if you book one of our “pregnancy options” appointments. If your options do not
seem to be reflected here (for example, you are over 15 weeks and 6 days into your pregnancy), you can contact a nurse to outline your options out of province.

Resources

Dealing with an abortion can be complicated. Luckily, here in Nova Scotia we have lots of great resources. The Maritime Abortion Support Services can connect you to an abortion doula (a trained support person) and other resources, such as someone to drive you to and from your procedure.

Other organizations that may be helpful are family resource centres (such as the Chebucto Family Centre), the provincial 811 nursing line, Mobile Crisis, counsellors from the Termination of Pregnancy Unit at the hospital, hospital chaplains, the Mi’kmaq Crisis Line, Belmont House, Bayer’s Road Mental Health Clinic, and South House Gender and Sexuality Resource Centre.

HOW TO BOOK AND PREPARE FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT AT HSHC

Booking an appointment with us is easy! Give us a call at 902.455.9656 ext. 0. A volunteer or a medical administrator will answer the phone. To book a pregnancy options appointment, you must speak with an administrator. If you would like to book for a termination, the staff on the phone will tell you to call 1-833-352-0719.

We cannot book appointments by email or Facebook.

While we can give you information about the abortion process, you cannot book an appointment for someone else, even if they are your partner or child. We will need to speak with the person directly.

Make sure you bring your valid provincial health card with you to your appointment. Clients without health cards are subject to doctors’ fees.

Are you a youth? You do not need parental consent for any of our appointments.

Don’t have access to or lost your health card? You are entitled to your health card information! Call MSI toll-free at 1-800-563-8880 (in Nova Scotia) or at 902-496-7008 from Monday-Friday 8am-5pm. We require the number and the expiry date. Another tip: take a picture of your card! You will never lose it again!
In the News

THE COAST: Halifax Sexual Health Centre sees people through their most intimate problems

Upcoming Events

There are no upcoming events at this time.

About HSHC

The Halifax Sexual Health Centre (HSHC) has been serving Halifax since 1970. Our health services and resources are sex positive, pro-choice, inclusive, and non-judgemental.

HSHC is a member-centre of Sexual Health Nova Scotia.

Privacy Policy
Office Info

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T:  902-455-9656

Monday 8:30am - 5pm
Tuesday 8:30am - 8pm
Wednesday 8:30am - 8pm
Thursday 8:30am - 8pm
Friday 8:30am - 5pm

Metro Transit
bus access: #7, 9+, 17, 18, 32, 42, 80, 81