

Voluntary termination of pregnancy

—
Information and advice



ETAT DE FRIBOURG
STAAT FREIBURG

Direction de la santé et des affaires sociales DSAS
Direktion für Gesundheit und Soziales GSD



Is terminating a pregnancy legal?



Swiss Federal law, permits a woman to terminate a pregnancy **within the first twelve weeks** (calculated from the first day of her last menstrual period). If she decides to have the procedure, she must sign a document in consultation with a doctor in which she states that she is in a condition of distress and unable to continue the pregnancy. She defines this condition herself with no constraints and does not need any further documentation. The doctor may also give her a list of providers who offer free services, a list of associations/organizations which are able to help her with moral and material support, and information on other options like carrying the pregnancy to term and putting the child up for adoption.

The woman can ask for advice from the Division of family planning and information on sexual concerns (Secteur de planning familial et d'information sexuelle / PFIS). Women **without health insurance** can also get information from Fri-Santé (see 'addresses'). This would for example, apply to women without a resident's permit.)

A special rule applies to young women under sixteen years of age: In order to obtain an abortion, a mandatory consultation with either the PFIS or with the child psychiatry centre is required (see 'addresses'). If the young woman is deemed to be capable of understanding her situation, she may also decide for herself whether she wants to carry the pregnancy to full term or whether she wishes to terminate it. In general, consent from parents or guardians is not required.

Terminating a pregnancy after the twelfth week is only possible if the physical and /or psychological health of the woman is in danger. Her doctors need to evaluate such a situation. The law stipulates that the threat to her health has to be more severe, the further advanced the stage of the pregnancy. A pregnancy can also be terminated if prenatal diagnostic evaluation reveals a fetal abnormality which would significantly to the pregnant woman's distress.

Information and advice available from the Division of family planning and information on sexual concerns (Secteur de planning familial et d'information sexuelle / PFIS)



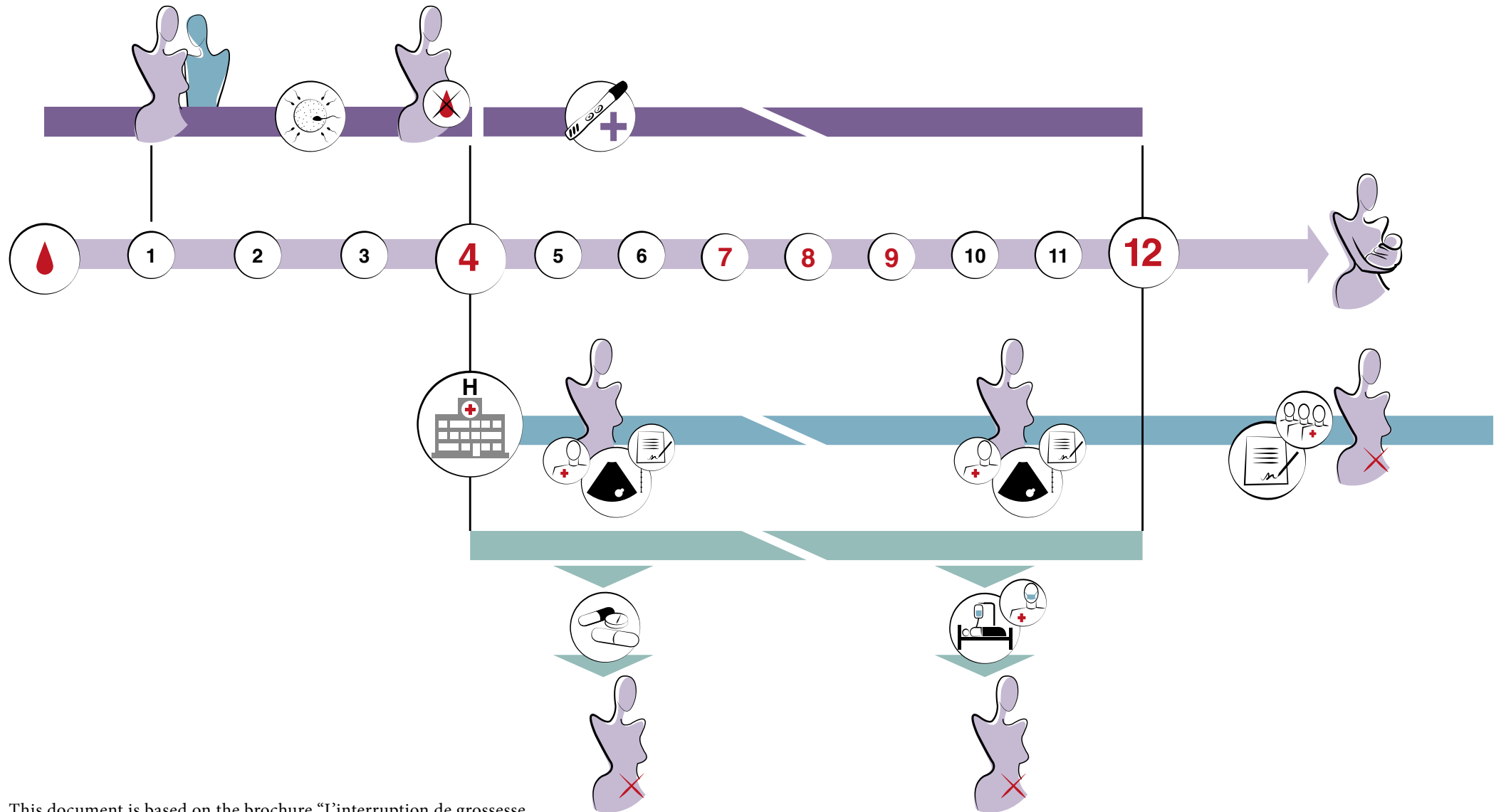
The final decision whether a pregnancy should go to full term or be terminated during the first 12 weeks has to be made by the pregnant woman. The woman, her partner, or those close to her may at any time ask for a free and non judgmental **meeting** with a PFIS counsellor. The counsellor will provide information to the persons concerned and offer them a chance to think over and express their reactions, feelings, doubts and needs about their personal situation, in a safe and neutral environment, to enable them to make an informed decision.

Whatever the decision, the PFIS is mandated to **guide** them through the process with **free** advice and support. The PFIS is open to anyone residing in the canton of Fribourg, regardless of the status of their resident's permit. The counsellors are bound to maintain professional secrecy.

If a pregnant woman decides to **go to full term with her pregnancy**, the PFIS will guide and support her and her partner and those close to her, in psychosocial, financial or legal issues. The counsellor can also help contact the persons in the Canton's social services/institutions who are able to provide financial assistance.

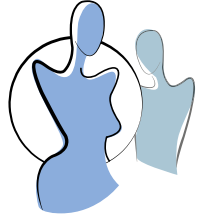
The PFIS also has information on the possibility of putting a child up for adoption. If the pregnant woman opts for this choice, Canton Fribourg's Department of Child and Youth Services (Service de l'enfance et de la jeunesse / SEJ) will guide her through the steps and procedures.

Voluntary termination of pregnancy: Overview



This document is based on the brochure "L'interruption de grossesse en Suisse" (Termination of pregnancy in Switzerland) published by SANTÉ SEXUELLE Suisse

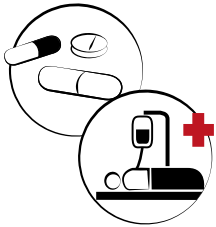
Questions and Answers



Does the husband, the partner or the pregnant woman's parents have to be informed about the termination of a pregnancy, and do they have to give their consent?

No, as long as the pregnant woman is deemed capable of making decisions, it is she who decides. With her consent, the meetings can take place in the presence of her partner and/or another close person.

For young women who do not wish that their parents be informed about their termination of pregnancy, confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed because the health insurance provider will send the summary of charges to her parents if they are the ones responsible for her health insurance coverage.



Methods of termination of a pregnancy

A pregnancy can be terminated either by **taking medication** or through **surgery**. The choice of method will depend on the pregnant woman's wish, the stage of pregnancy and any concurrent illnesses or other risks from pre-existing conditions in the woman.

Physical pain

An abortion may be painful, though it need not be. Pain medication properly prescribed should prevent this. Working with a PFIS counsellor and/or the support from a close person can also be helpful.



Psychological Repercussions

Abortion may cause mixed feelings such as relief, sadness or a need to grieve. Serious, lasting psychological consequences are rare. The PFIS will counsel the woman and those close to her after the abortion.

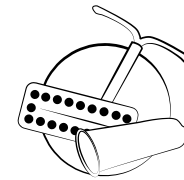


Fertility

A properly conducted abortion does not usually affect future fertility or the ability to conceive. It should not prevent a later pregnancy.

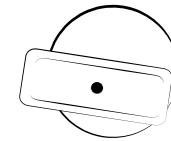
Costs

An abortion costs between Fr.1000 and Fr.2000. The procedure is covered by the health insurance provider. Regardless of the chosen method, there will be some insurance deductible and patient share costs.



Contraception

For protecting themselves from unwanted pregnancy, adolescents and adults can consult the PFIS to choose a method of contraception.



Emergency Contraception or "morning after pill"

The "morning after pill" stops a pregnancy from developing, but does not abort an already established pregnancy. If already pregnant, it does not put the embryo in danger. The "morning after pill" is available without prescription in a pharmacy, at the PFIS, or from a doctor. It is an emergency measure that has to be taken **within 72 hours after sexual intercourse**. It is important to remember that it does not replace contraception.



Sexually transmitted diseases

Only condoms give protection from sexually transmitted diseases. After unprotected sex, an STD screening test can rule out possible sexually transmitted diseases like HIV, gonorrhea or syphilis. A doctor or the PFIS can advise where tests are conducted.

Who provides services in the canton of Fribourg?

Practicing obstetrician / gynecologists, family doctors, the department of obstetrics / gynecology in hospitals

all provide information on medical issues and a support network for pregnant women.

Division of family planning and information on sexual concerns (PFIS)

provides guidance and support and information on medical, psychosocial and financial issues. They also furnish information on alternative options like adoption, and other help. For a termination of pregnancy minors below 16 years of age must contact the PFIS for a mandatory consultation.

Rue de la Grand-Fontaine 50 | 1700 Fribourg
Tel: 026 305 29 55 | www.fr.ch/spfis

Fri-Santé

Furnishes information, advice, and contact addresses for termination of pregnancy for women without health insurance.

Pérolles 30 | 1700 Fribourg
Tel: 026 341 03 30 | www.frisante.ch

Department of child and youth services (SEJ)

This department has a mandate for protecting and helping persons in the process for putting a child up for adoption.

Pérolles 24 | 1700 Fribourg
Tél: 026 305 15 30 | www.fr.ch/sej



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Service du médecin cantonal SMC
Kantonsarztamt KAA



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Service de l'enfance et de la jeunesse SEJ
Jugendamt JA

Fri () santé

espace de soins et d'orientation
raum für beratung und behandlung