

Effects of multiple abortions ^[1]

Dear Alice,

What are the dangers in having multiple abortions? I have had two. I really don't want to have another one. I'm just seeing what are the risks. Like chances of getting pregnant again or what is the max. on abortions.

— Inquiring Mind

Answer

Dear Inquiring Mind,

Taking the initiative to find out about the possible risk(s) of multiple abortions makes sense. Fortunately, women who have had an abortion in a safe, sterile environment by a trained provider usually don't have future fertility or pre-natal complications. Also, there is no medically or legally mandated maximum number of abortions that a woman can have; this is a decision that is up to a woman and her health care provider.

Having one or more abortions carries little to no risk of future pregnancy complications such as infertility, ectopic pregnancy, miscarriage, or birth defects for future pregnancies. Some research suggests that women who have multiple surgical abortions may be slightly more likely to have complications such as low-birth weight babies or pre-term birth. This is not to say, however, that abortion *causes* adverse pregnancy outcomes. Instead, some women who have abortions may also have other life events or risk factors that predisposed them to having low-birth weight babies and/or pre-term births (as opposed to the abortion leading to these complications).

You mention that you want to avoid having another abortion; many women share this feeling and use birth control to avoid becoming pregnant. There are several contraception options, including birth control pills, the ring, the patch, the shot (Depo Provera), Implanon, IUDs, and/or condoms. Keep in mind that only condoms also reduce the risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Speaking with a health care provider about what forms of contraception might be right for you.

Finally, if you do have sex when a birth control method was not used or failed, you still have a

non-abortion birth control option: emergency contraception (EC). EC is most effective if taken within 72 hours, but can be taken up to 120 hours (five days) after sex. It is important to know that if taken within the recommended period of time, EC can only help to prevent a pregnancy. EC will not terminate an existing pregnancy. Though there are several forms of EC, Plan B One-Step® and other generic one-pill formulations of EC are now available on retail shelves at many local pharmacies and drugstores. Those interested in getting these types of EC will not need a prescription and proof-of-age will not be required to purchase. If you live in New York City, EC can be obtained for free, 24 hours a day at any public hospital within the five boroughs. For more information, check out [Emergency contraception basic information](#) [2].

Some women find that having an abortion is the right choice in the event of an unwanted pregnancy, even if they have already had one or more abortions. Since you expressed an interest in preventing another pregnancy, you may want to consider what contraception would fit best into your life. In the end, the choice is yours.

Good luck,

Alice!

Category:

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[Pregnancy Options](#) [4]

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[Medical Services \(CUIMC\)](#) [10]

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Footer menu

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Links

- [1] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/effects-multiple-abortions>
- [2] <http://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/emergency-contraception-basic-information-0>
- [3] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/sexual-reproductive-health>
- [4] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/pregnancy-options>
- [5] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/morning-after-pill-23>
- [6] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/abortion-after-first-trimester>
- [7] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/where-can-you-get-morning-after-pill-0>
- [8] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/what-outercourse>
- [9] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/medical-services-morningside>
- [10] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/medical-services-cuimc>