

## UHCS Abortion Referral Fact Sheet

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

The decision to seek abortion is a complicated one - how it fits with our lives, our resources, our beliefs. Access should not be another complication.

#### **How can I get an abortion?**

UHCS medical providers can offer consultation about your options, depending on the stage of the pregnancy, your health, and your preferences (see “What are the different types of abortion?”), and can refer you to local, regional, or online providers. You may also contact abortion providers directly, without a referral. If you are more than 16 weeks pregnant, we recommend starting with Planned Parenthood to expedite the use of their referral network for abortion after 16 weeks.

If you are interested in a consultation, or a free in-office pregnancy test, call UHCS at 617-373-2772 to make an appointment. UHCS offers free in-office pregnancy tests.

#### **Is it legal to get an abortion?**

Abortion is legal in Massachusetts (MA) from conception through the 23rd week of pregnancy. After 23 weeks, abortion is legal if someone’s physical or mental health, life, or pregnancy is at risk.

Weeks of pregnancy are determined by counting from the first day of your last menstrual period.

Abortion services in MA are completely confidential for people aged 16 and older. An abortion provider cannot disclose information to anyone other than their patient, without their permission. Minors under 16 must receive parental consent or permission from a judge through a judicial bypass procedure.

To learn about abortion policies in other states, visit [states.guttmacher.org/policies](https://states.guttmacher.org/policies).

#### **Is it safe to get an abortion?**

According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, abortion is a “[common medical intervention that improves the lives, health, and well-being of those who need it](#)”.

Abortion does not cause increased risk of cancer, infertility, or mental health issues. There are some risks associated with abortion like all medical procedures, but they are rare. Earlier pregnancies often experience lower rates of these risks. These risks include the procedure not

being effective (the pregnancy is not ended), heavy bleeding, and infection. More information available on Planned Parenthood's website:

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/abortion>.

MA State law provides protections from harassment and physical harm for anyone entering an abortion clinic. Depending on the location, there may be protestors present outside the clinic.

### **What are the different types of abortion?**

Medication abortion ("abortion pill"): Medication abortion involves taking pills which cause your uterus to contract and expel the pregnancy tissue (similar to the process of an early miscarriage). The most common pills used are misoprostol and mifepristone. This type of abortion is recommended within the first eight weeks of pregnancy but is available to individuals who are up to 11 weeks pregnant. Some telehealth providers can prescribe abortion medication without an in-person office visit and can send pills through the mail.

In-clinic abortion: During an in-clinic abortion, a healthcare provider ends the pregnancy by emptying the uterus. There are two types of in-clinic abortion procedures.

- Suction abortion (also called vacuum aspiration) is the most common in-clinic abortion. This type of abortion should be accessible up to approximately 16 weeks after your last period. This procedure involves using gentle suction to remove the fetal tissue.
- Dilation and Evacuation (D&E) abortion is typically used for those who are more than 16 weeks pregnant, using suction and medical tools to empty the uterus.

Important: Options for abortion care may change depending on legal regulations and clinical recommendations. Check with your abortion provider for the most current information.

### **How do I decide which type of abortion is right for me?**

Important factors to consider when determining which type of abortion best suits your situation include 1) the stage of the pregnancy, 2) your health, 3) your feelings or preferences. Consulting with your medical provider can be a helpful step in determining which of these options is recommended for your circumstances.

### **How much does it cost to get an abortion?**

The cost of an abortion depends on the type of abortion and how many weeks an individual has been pregnant at the time of the procedure. Without insurance, medical and surgical abortions are approximately \$500-\$1200+. In Massachusetts, private health insurances are required to cover abortion, including [NUSHP](#). MA State Medicaid funds cover abortion.



If you require additional funding assistance in Massachusetts, reach out to [The Jane Fund](#) (1-508-829-7300) or the [Eastern Massachusetts Abortion Fund](#) (866. 354.3839). Search for additional abortion funds across the country at [abortionfunds.org/need-abortion/](http://abortionfunds.org/need-abortion/).

If you require additional funding assistance in California, please see Access Reproductive Justice in affiliation with the National Network of Abortion Funds at their [website](#) or call 800-376-4636 for the English hotline.

### **How do I prepare to get an abortion?**

Plan ahead to make sure your experience will be as comfortable as possible. Wear loose, comfortable clothes, and have snacks, a plan for pain management, and thicker pads on hand for bleeding. Identify a support person who can accompany you if you're going into a clinic. Be gentle with yourself and take time away from obligations and activities as needed.

### **What else should I know about getting an abortion?**

After an abortion, it is not uncommon to experience bleeding for two to four weeks. Please also be aware that:

- Abortions do not prevent your ability to conceive, even immediately after your procedure. Contraception is recommended to prevent unintended pregnancy.
- Pregnancy tests can continue to read positive for 3-5 weeks after an abortion.
- Menstrual cycle tracking will not be reliable for several months following an abortion.

### **How can I ensure my privacy?**

UHCS is committed to providing confidential medical care to Northeastern University students.

MA State law protects abortion providers from investigations by other states; may cover patients and support organizations.

The Protect Access to Confidential Healthcare (PATCH) Act allows an individual between 18-26 to choose how and where your health insurance company sends your summary of payment (SOP), an explanation of services sent from your insurance company after your healthcare visit.

Contact your health insurance provider to learn more about where your explanation of benefits (EOB) is sent and to update your address.

### **Additional Support:**

Peer Support:



Northeastern University  
**University Health &  
Counseling Services**

- NU SHARE, Northeastern's reproductive justice student group, has Abortion Referral resources on their website (<https://northeasternshare.wixsite.com/share>). Contact NU SHARE on Instagram (@northeasternshare), via email([northeasternshare@gmail.com](mailto:northeasternshare@gmail.com)), or on Slack to ask questions to a peer or join advocacy efforts.

Mental Health Resources:

- For free one-to-one counseling or an appointment with a local or video counselor call [Find@Northeastern 877-233-9477](tel:877-233-9477), available 24/7. UHCS also offers [mental health walk-in hours](#).

If you need additional support or assistance connecting with campus resources, including academic accommodations and transport to referral locations, talk with a healthcare provider at UHCS.

*Thank you to NU Sexual Health Advocacy, Resources, and Education (NU SHARE) and NU Law School If/When/How Chapter for compiling this Fact Sheet. Thank you to [CornellHealth](#) for inspiring this Fact Sheet.*