

Incomplete Abortion: Fetal parts or other products of pregnancy may not be completely emptied from the uterus, requiring further medical procedures. Incomplete abortion may result in infection and bleeding. The reported rate of such complications is less than 1% after a dilation and evacuation (D & E).

Blood Clots in the Uterus: Blood clots that cause severe cramping occur in about 1% of all abortions. The clots usually are removed by a repeat dilation and suction curettage.

Heavy Bleeding (Hemorrhage): Some amount of bleeding is common following an abortion. Heavy bleeding (hemorrhage) is not common and may be treated by repeat suction, medication, or, rarely, surgery. Ask the doctor to explain what to do if it occurs.

Cut or Torn Cervix: The opening of the uterus (cervix) may be torn while it is being stretched open to allow medical instruments to pass through and into the uterus. This happens in less than 1% of first trimester abortions.

Perforation of the Uterus Wall: A medical instrument may go through the wall of the uterus. The reported rate is 1% out of every 1000 with early abortions and 3 out of every 1000 with dilation and evacuation (D & E). Depending on the severity, perforation can lead to infection, heavy bleeding or both. Surgery may be required to repair the uterine tissue, and in the most severe cases, hysterectomy may be required.

Anesthesia-Related Complications: As with other surgical procedures, anesthesia increases the risk of complications associated with abortion. The reported risk of anesthesia-related complications is around 1 per 5,000 abortions. Most are allergic reactions producing fever, rash and discomfort.

Breast Cancer: Studies show that women who have children before age 30 have a lower risk of breast cancer than those who have children later in life or no children at all. Findings from other studies suggest an increased risk of breast cancer among women who had one or more abortions.

Early Non-Surgical Abortion

A drug is given that stops the hormones needed for the fetus to grow. In addition, it causes the placenta to separate from the uterus, ending the pregnancy.