

Abortion after week 12 of pregnancy

Information from the Secretariat under the Abortion Council



Socialmedicin og Rehabilitering

Regionshospitalet Gødstrup

Region Midtjylland

Abortion after the normal abortion time limit

All women in Denmark are allowed to free abortion until their 12th week of pregnancy. Under exceptional circumstances the Council may allow women to have an abortion after their 12th week of pregnancy.

What is the Abortion Council?

The National Board of Health has established an Abortion Council for the Region of Central Denmark. The Council's tasks are to consider requests for abortion after the 12th week of pregnancy and requests from minors for abortion without the consent of the minors' parents. The council has three members: One doctor specializing in gynaecology, one doctor specializing in psychiatry, and one Region employee with a law degree or a social education.

According to the Danish Health Act, Article 94, §1, the Abortion Council can give permission to abortion after week 12 of pregnancy:

- if your pregnancy poses a health risk
- if your pregnancy is a result of rape or other criminal offence committed against you
- if the child is likely to suffer from a serious physical or mental illness
- if you are physically or mentally retarded and unable to care for a child
- if you are very young or immature and unable to care for a child
- if the pregnancy, delivery or caring for the child will turn out to be such a serious burden that it is considered necessary to terminate the pregnancy in your best interest, in the interest of keeping your home or caring for other children in the family

Abortion if you are a minor

If you are under the age of 18, one of your parents must consent to the abortion. However, you may be granted permission by the Abortion Council to have an abortion without your parents' consent, provided that extraordinary factors are involved in your mutual relationship.

If you consider having an abortion

If you consider requesting for permission to have an abortion, you must contact your GP, who will refer you to a scan procedure at the hospital. The result of the scan is necessary in order to determine the exact stage of your pregnancy. When you have been scanned, the hospital will send your request for abortion to the Secretariat under the Abortion Council, and you will be summoned for a session. During the session, you will have the opportunity to argue your case to the Council.

Where do the sessions take place?

In the Region of Central Denmark the sessions are carried out by the Department of Social Medicine and Rehabilitation, which has departments in the towns of Aarhus and Gødstrup. Usually, a social worker and a doctor specializing in social medicine participate in the sessions. The session lasts for about 1½ hours, and you will be asked about your present situation as well as your background. You are welcome to bring a relative, who is allowed to participate during most of the session. The information given by you is confidential and will not be forwarded to any hospital or your GP.

When will you be informed of the Council's decision?

After the session the social worker and the doctor specializing in social medicine will write a report about your situation to the members of the Abortion Council. The Abortion Council meet every Tuesday at 4 pm, at which point all new requests are treated. Immediately after the session you will be contacted by phone on the number that you have stated, and you will be informed of the Council's decision.

If you are granted permission to have an abortion

If you are granted permission to have an abortion, the permission is generally valid for one week. During the course of this week you have the opportunity to have an abortion, if you still wish so. The Council's decision regarding your case will be forwarded to the hospital and normally your GP. It is your own responsibility unless otherwise agreed to contact the authority that referred you to the Abortion Council in order to arrange a date on which the abortion can be performed.

If you are not granted permission to have an abortion

If your request is denied, you may appeal against the ruling. When the Abortion Council contacts you about the ruling, you will be informed of your opportunities to appeal. The information about your case will be forwarded to the Abortion Appeals Board, which then makes the final decision in the course of a few days.

Who can you talk to before and after the abortion?

If you need to talk to somebody before or after the abortion, you have the following possibilities:

- Your GP will support you, either by talking with you or letting the clinic nurse talk with you, or by referring you to a psychologist. Referral must happen within 6 months after the abortion and your charge is 40 per cent of the normal rate.
- After the abortion most gynaecological departments offer supportive conversations about the course with the nurse or doctor who were attached to your case.

Where can you get more information?

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the Secretariat under the Abortion Council, phone +45 7843 5006.

Addresses

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