

The breast cancer/abortion connection

(Submitted by Muskegon County Right to Life)

Megan (True story with only the name changed.) was only 10 when her mom was diagnosed with breast cancer. She watched her mom endure the pain of the disease and the supposed cure as she underwent a mastectomy and chemotherapy. Megan normally could have turned to her beloved grandmother for comfort. But her grandmother was diagnosed with breast cancer at the same time and was undergoing treatment herself. After a four-year battle, Megan's mom died at the young age of 39. Her grandma lived six more years before she died of the disease.

When Megan was 17, she became pregnant. At nine weeks, she made an appointment at an abortion clinic. When she arrived, they took her to a room filled with other girls, gave her valium, explained the procedure, and performed the abortion. At no time did they ask her family or personal medical history.

Megan is now 22. Because of her mother's and grandmother's breast cancer, she is considered high risk. She can't do anything about this. What she didn't know was that her abortion, combined with her family history, her age and the early stage of pregnancy termination, increased her chances of breast cancer by as much as 800 percent before the age of 45! Why hadn't she been told this? Why, if abortion is about choice, hadn't she been given this information so she could make an informed choice?

If you or someone you know is considering abortion, please read this before you decide. Megan did not know the facts before she chose. You will, if you continue reading.

How does an abortion increase my risk of getting breast cancer?

When you become pregnant, your body produces a surge of the hormone estrogen. This causes the cells in the breast to multiply rapidly in the first half of the pregnancy. In the second half, other hormones are produced to stop this rapid growth and to direct these cells to perform new functions, such as producing milk. These last changes protect the cells against cancer-causing substances. When you have an abortion, all of those millions of cells are left immature and growing too fast. Without the second surge of hormones to turn off the growth and direct the cell, they are left open and vulnerable to cancer.

Is the risk higher for some women than for others?

Yes. The risk of breast cancer among the general population of women is now close to 12 percent. That means 12 out of every 100 women in this country will get breast cancer. For women who have never had children, it is closer to 20 percent. And for those who have had no children, and also have one or more abortions, it is closer to 50 percent. If you have a family history of breast cancer (mother, aunt, grandmother or sister) and have an early abortion at a young age, your chances of getting breast cancer before age 45 are increased 800 percent! This means that you are eight times more likely to get breast cancer than if you didn't have any of these factors. This was the result of research funding by the American Cancer Institute in 1994.

Have there been other studies that have the same results?

There have been numerous studies that indicate having an abortion increases your risk of breast cancer. Here are just a few:

1981—A Los Angeles study found a significant 2-4 times higher incidence of breast cancer among women under 33 years of age who aborted their first baby.

1993 — A Howard University study showed that African American women over age 50 were 4.7 times more likely to get breast cancer if they had an abortion compared to women who had not had abortions.

1994 — A National Cancer Institute study of over 1,800 women in Washington State found a 50 percent increased risk among women who had abortions. The risk was more than double for women whose first abortion took place before age 18 or over age 30.

Does it matter what kind of abortion you have?

No. It doesn't matter what kind of abortion you have. Whether you have a surgical D&C abortion or a chemical abortion using RU-486 you still increase your chances of breast cancer.

What are the factors that increase my risk?

- How late your pregnancy is terminated.
- Your age when you terminate your pregnancy
- Whether you terminate your first pregnancy.
- How many abortions you have.

Abortion is offered as a simple solution. Abortion clinics don't take any of the medical information you would have to give for any other kind of surgery. Nor do they tell you all of the risks. Yet, it is your body. You have a right to know all of the risks and consequences of an abortion. Otherwise, it isn't a choice!•

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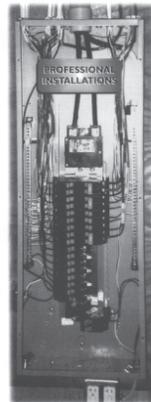


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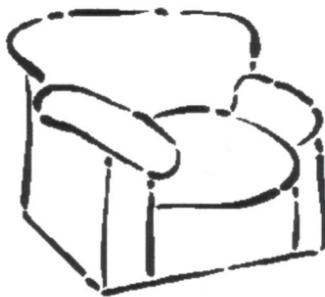
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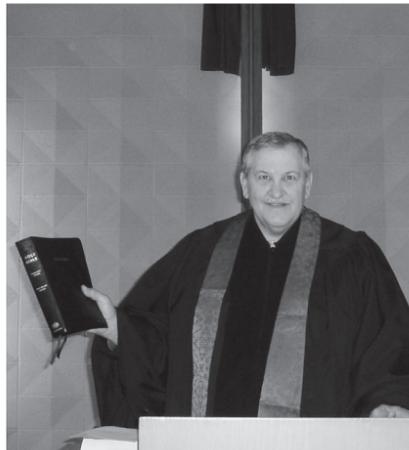
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