



Abortion Rights
Coalition of Canada

Coalition pour le droit à
l'avortement au Canada

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Position Paper # 15

How to Get an Abortion in Canada

Abortion has been a legal right for Canadian women since 1988 when the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the old restrictive laws. Under the *Canada Health Act*, all abortions must be publicly funded whether performed in a hospital or an abortion clinic. However, there are circumstances where you may have to cover the cost of an abortion yourself (i.e., clinic abortions are not covered by Medicare in New Brunswick; abortions obtained outside your home province may not be covered).

When seeking to terminate a pregnancy in Canada, the ease with which you can access abortion services will depend largely on where you live. Women living in large urban centres like Vancouver, Toronto, or Montreal will find it much easier than someone living in smaller communities or rural areas.

Access is one of the main obstacles women face today when looking for abortion services. A 2003 CARAL study on access showed that less than one in five Canadian hospitals provides abortion services. To further complicate the matter, the requirements for a hospital abortion differ province to province as does the maximum gestation period, which can vary from 10 weeks to 20 weeks.

Other obstacles facing women looking for abortion services include anti-choice doctors who will not make referrals for abortion, or gatekeepers (receptionists, nursing staff) who may refer callers to pregnancy counselling centres that oppose abortion. It can be frustrating and time-consuming in a situation that is time-sensitive.

Help is available....

The following information will help you find out what services are available in your area:

- Look in the yellow pages of the phone book under “Abortion Services”. Be wary of contacting anti-choice organizations by mistake. These organizations are usually listed under “Abortion Counselling Services” or “Abortion Alternatives”.
- Email the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada at info@arcc-cdac.ca
- Call The National Abortion Federation toll-free hotline, 1-800-424-2280.