

Reproductive Glossary: A Guide to Key Terminology

- **20 Week Ban** Legislation that bans abortions after 20 weeks of gestation. There is no medical reason for such a ban, and they have been consistently found by the courts to be unconstitutional.
- **Abortion** – Termination of a pregnancy before a fetus is viable. The vast majority of elective abortions (more than 90%) in the US happen in the first three months. First trimester abortion does not involve surgery, and legal abortion is one of the safest medical procedures in the country. Colonoscopies, laser eye surgery, and carrying a pregnancy to term are exponentially more medically risky than abortion.
- One in three American women will have an abortion in their lifetime. Two-thirds of women who have abortions already have children. Colorado was the first state to allow safe, legal abortion – it did so on a bipartisan basis in 1967, after the Supreme Court’s Griswold decision establishing the Constitutional right to privacy but before the Roe decision establishing a right to abortion. According to the American Congress of Obstetrician Gynecologists, “Safe, legal abortion is a necessary component of women’s health care.”
- **Abortion Provider** - A medical provider, such as an Ob-Gyn, certified to conduct abortions. To find a provider go to www.prochoicecolorado.org
- **Access to Abortion** - Every woman should have access to safe and legal abortion. Access to abortion is a Constitutional Right under the 14th Amendment according to the ruling in Roe v. Wade.
- **ACOG** – Founded in 1951, The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) is the nation’s most widely recognized and respected medical professional membership organization dedicated to the improvement of women’s health. Its companion organization The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists focuses on socioeconomic, political, and grievance activities for its members.
- **Birth Control Contraception** - - Contraception prevents pregnancy. Birth control is not abortion – abortion is the termination of an existing pregnancy. Contraceptives include the birth control implant, patch, pills, shot, sponge, vaginal ring, cervical cap, condom, diaphragm, female condom, IUD, morning-after pill, spermicide, tubal sterilization, and vasectomy.



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- **Co-Pay** - The Affordable Care Act requires health plans to cover certain preventative health services, including prescription birth control, as a basic benefit. That means that most women who use prescription birth control will get it with no co-pay – that is, direct out-of-pocket cost - at the pharmacy.
- **Emergency Contraception** - Also known as the “morning after pill”, emergency contraception prevents pregnancy up to five days after sex. It is available over the counter in Colorado and is usually included in most rape kits in emergency rooms. Note: emergency contraception should NOT be confused with the abortion medication RU-486. These are two entirely different drugs.
- **Ectopic Pregnancy** A life-threatening pregnancy that develops outside the uterus, often in a fallopian tube (tubal pregnancy). Ectopic pregnancies are extremely dangerous and fatal to the woman if not removed
- **Griswold v Connecticut** – Decided in 1965, the Supreme Court’s decision in Griswold v Connecticut established a Constitutional right to privacy and protected the right to use birth control. It laid the foundation for the Roe v Wade decision in 1973.
- **Fetus** - The organism that develops from the embryo at the end of about eight weeks of pregnancy (10 weeks since a woman’s last menstrual period) and receives nourishment through the placenta.
- **Intrauterine Device (IUD)** – A device implanted in the uterus to prevent pregnancy. It is among the most effective birth control methods, with an effectiveness rate of around 99%. IUDs can prevent pregnancy for anywhere from 3-12 years. Because IUDs are default protection, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends them for teenagers. However, although highly effective, IUDs are also among the most expensive forms of birth control up front, starting at about \$500 if not covered by insurance, which creates a barrier to access for many women.
- **Implant** – Along with IUDs, a form of Long Acting Reversible Contraception. Implants consist of a very small rod inserted under the skin of a woman's upper arm to provide birth control. It's invisible and prevents pregnancy for up to 4 years with an effectiveness rate of 99%.



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- **LARC** - Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) are “set it and forget it” forms of contraception (usually IUDs and implants) that are highly effective, can last for years, and require no further action on the patient’s part once administered. The methods are reversible and patients can become pregnant once the IUD or implant is removed.
- **Late Term Abortion** - An abortion after 23 weeks. If this is legal in a state, it is only done if the life of the mother is at risk or if the baby is dead in order to avoid a stillbirth.
- **Medication Abortion/RU-486** – A first-trimester abortion option using pills that terminates an existing pregnancy. Medication abortions are FDA-approved as safe and effective for pregnancy termination. The drug protocol is two-step: mifepristone, which is taken in combination with misoprostol. RU-486 is NOT the same drug as emergency contraception.
- **Partial Birth Abortion** - This is a political propaganda term, not a medical one. It has no relevance in actual medical practice. Anti-abortion advocates use it incorrectly to refer to late term abortion.
- **The Pill** – Also called oral contraceptives, the Pill was first introduced in 1965. Still the most common form of birth control for American women, it can be less effective because a woman has to remember to take it every day. Many, but not all, forms of the Pill are required to be covered by insurance without a co-pay by the Affordable Care Act. Without insurance, costs can be \$50 a month and up.
- **Personhood** Giving legal rights – or “personhood” to a fertilized egg, even before pregnancy begins. It would ban all abortions (including ectopic pregnancies) and many forms of birth control.
- **Pregnancy** – Pregnancy begins when a fertilized egg implants in the uterus. It is a complicated process, and can begin 8-18 days after fertilization according to ACOG. Between one-third and one-half of all fertilized eggs never fully implant and begin a pregnancy.



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- **Roe v Wade** – The 1973 Supreme Court ruling establishing a Constitutional right to an abortion under the 14th Amendment. Abortion was legal in a handful of states before Roe – including Colorado with restrictions – but not legal in most of the country. Roe established that women have a Constitutional right to choose abortion no matter where they live. Roe has been upheld multiple times, most recently in June 2016 in the *Whole Women’s Health v Hellerstedt* case.
- **Sonogram** - A picture of the fetus in the uterus produced by the visualizing technology called ultrasonography. First trimester sonograms require the use of an ultrasound wand inserted in the vagina to establish the age of the fetus. Mandatory sonogram/ultrasound laws are used to attempt to shame women out of having an abortion.
- **Trap** - Targeted Regulation of Abortion Provider laws. TRAP laws have nothing to do with women’s health or safety. They’re designed to regulate abortion providers out of existence with medically unnecessary requirements such as hall widths and ER admitting privileges for providers.
- ***Whole Women’s Health v. Hellerstedt*** – Announced on June 27, 2016, this is the most recent Supreme Court decision upholding Roe. It found that TRAP laws are Unconstitutional because they are designed to interfere with a woman’s Constitutional access to abortion



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