Pregnancy and Abortion Basics

	Overview						
Pregnancy (Human Pregnancy)	 The process of creating a new human offspring inside the womb (uterus) of a female body The process begins at fertilization and ends with either childbirth, abortion, or miscarriage During the process, the human embryo/fetus develops (gestates) in the female womb 						
Abortion	 Ending a pregnancy <u>without</u> creating a live human offspring An induced abortion (known as an abortion), occurs in about ~20% of U.S. pregnancies via 3 methods: Medication (~60%): Uses drugs like mifepristone to end a pregnancy (0-12 weeks after LMP) Surgery (~40%): Uses a suction device to remove the embryo/fetus (12+ weeks after LMP) Other (<1%): Uses unorthodox methods to induce labor like herbs or abdominal pressure 						
(Miscarriage)	• A spontaneous abortion (known as a miscarriage) occurs in about ~15% of U.S. pregnancies						
History of Abortion	 Throughout world history, abortions have been both <u>repeatedly performed</u> and <u>often condemned</u> 1550 BCE: The 1st recorded evidence of an induced abortion occurred in Ancient Egypt, using herbs 500 BCE: The Greek physician Hippocrates barred abortions using a pessary (tong-like instrument) 300s CE: Roman Law & the Early Church barred abortions after the "quickening" (fetal movement) 1869: The Catholic Church condemned abortions at any stage of pregnancy 1920: The Soviet Union became the first modern country to legalize abortion upon request 1967: The United Kingdom legalized abortion via the Abortion Act of 1967 1973: The U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion as a constitutional right via Roe v. Wade 2000: Abortion access expanded in the U.S. with the approval of the abortion pill (mifepristone) 2022: The U.S. Supreme Court ended the nation-wide right to an abortion via Dobbs v. JWHO 						
Timeline of Pregnancy and Abortion	 The timeline for a human pregnancy is typically 40 weeks (approximately 9 months) Pregnancy has historically been measured from the start of a woman's last menstrual period (LMP) An estimated 91% of U.S. abortions occur within 13 weeks of LMP, while 99.9% occur within 27 weeks 						
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Abortion Statistics in the United States	 The number of U.S. abortions has increased in recent years (2017 = 0.86M, 2021 = 0.93 M) In 2021, 930,160 U.S. women had an abortion: 70% were non-white 61% had given birth before Ethnicity of a Person Obtaining an Abortion (2021) Prior Births for a Person 						

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