

ISSUES

The truth about RU-486

By [Sarah Terzo](#) | February 23, 2013, 10:32am

Far from the safe and easy method pro-choice activists claim it is.

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RU-486, commonly referred to as the “abortion pill,” is the medication mifepristone. Combined with misoprostol, another drug, it causes an early abortion. Mifepristone

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ANALYSIS

Article in Harvard Law Journal concludes: The preborn child is a constitutional person

works by blocking the hormone progesterone, a process which causes the developing baby to detach from the uterine wall and die. Misoprostol then causes violent uterine contractions, expelling the baby and the placenta. Taken together, they are referred to as a “medical abortion.”

Lawrence Lader, abortion-rights activist and cofounder of NARAL Pro-Choice America (originally The National Association for Repeal of Abortion Laws), wrote a book in 1995 championing RU-486 and encouraging its use. According to Lader:

Two of the pill’s important attributes are its effectiveness and safety[.] ... It works by producing a heavy menstrual flow, virtually equivalent to a woman’s normal period. (1)

Dr. Elizabeth Aubeny assures women: “Most women have no pain at all” (2).

Planned Parenthood explains what a woman should expect if she takes RU-486 and misoprostol:

The abortion pill works by blocking the hormone progesterone. Without progesterone, the lining of the uterus breaks down, and pregnancy cannot continue.

...

The second medicine — misoprostol — will cause you to have cramps and bleed heavily. Some women may begin bleeding before taking the second medicine. But for most, the bleeding and cramping begin after taking it. It usually lasts a few hours. You may see large blood clots or tissue at the time of the abortion. (3)

Some women's experiences with RU-486 follow. You will see how "effective," "safe," and "painless" these abortions are.

Abby Johnson once worked at Planned Parenthood. She had always been told that the abortion pill was safe and easy. According to Planned Parenthood, it would be "nothing worse than ordinary period."

She took the first pill and felt no ill

effects. Then she took the misoprostol pills. This is how she describes her experience:

Ten minutes later, I started to feel pain in my abdomen unlike anything I had ever experienced. Then the blood came. It was gushing out of me. I couldn't wear a pad – nothing was able to absorb the amount of blood it was losing.

The only thing I could do was sit on the toilet. I sat there for hours... Bleeding, throwing up into the bathroom trashcan, crying and sweating.

I used to watch shows about childbirth. I would see these women in labor they would be covered in sweat. I would always think, "Gosh, do they keep it hot in the delivery room, or what?" But at that moment, sitting on the toilet, I knew it wasn't from heat... It was from pain. ...

Abby decided to soak in the bathtub, which brought her some momentary

relief. The cramps kept coming, however, and when she opened her eyes after only fifteen minutes in the bathtub, the water was bright red.

“It was like sitting in the middle of a crime scene.”

She goes on:

As soon as I was completely upright, I felt the pain worse than any other I had experienced.

I began to sweat again and felt faint. I grabbed onto the side of the shower wall to steady myself. Then I felt a release... And a splash into the water that was draining beneath me.

A blood clot the size of a lemon had fallen into my bathwater. Was this my baby?....

I stood in the warm shower for a few minutes feeling a little relief from the cramping. Then came the excruciating pain again.

I jumped out of the shower
and sat on the toilet.
Another lemon sized blood
clot. Then another. And
another. I thought I was
dying.

Abby was in the bathroom for 12
hours. She said the bleeding was too
heavy to lie in bed, so she spent the
evening on the bathroom floor.

When she called Planned
Parenthood and spoke to the nurse,
she was told that her experience was
“not abnormal.” For the next eight
weeks, she endured heavy bleeding,
cramping, and nausea. The Planned
Parenthood clinic nurse spoke the
truth – Abby’s experience was
indeed not abnormal.

In an article in the *Boston Phoenix*, a
woman describes an RU-486
abortion she had at six weeks. At six
weeks old, her unborn baby had a
heartbeat and his or her own
circulatory system. He or she was a
developing child, a unique individual
from conception whose hair color,
eye color, gender, and many other
characteristics were already
predetermined. This unborn baby
was a unique person who had never

existed before and would never exist again. Here is what happened during her abortion:

Back at the dorm, hours later, I know that I writhed in my twin bed, suffering from debilitating, convulsing cramps. My roommates, best friend, and boyfriend hovered around; they brought me pain killers, Tiger Balm, hot-water bottles, and applesauce, and all the while they stroked my head and conferenced in the background about how I was doing. I bled profusely as my body rejected the fetus that had been described to me as “the size of a grain of rice.” I threw up. And finally, I fell asleep. (4)

Another woman described her experience with an RU-486 abortion in *Time* magazine:

I was very nauseous in a couple of hours. I threw up constantly for three days... It was like food poisoning. I couldn't keep anything down.

I went into the restroom.
When I started to stand up,
it was like a faucet turning
on. There was a steady
stream of blood. I passed a
golf ball sized blood clot that
scared me. I thought maybe
it was the fetus.

The cramps stayed steady. In
the last fifteen minutes of
my appointment, I was
doubled over. The bleeding
was very heavy, heavier than
a period. My mom drove me
home. By this time, I was
bleeding severely, and I had
diarrhea. (5)

The partner of one woman who had
an RU-486 abortion described it as
“like giving birth.” He said, “It was a
bloody mess. Wendy went through
contractions, just like a pregnancy.
We didn’t think it would be quite like
that” (6).

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*Under Attack: Women on the
Challenges Facing Choice*, a
contributor describes her
experience with an RU-486 abortion
in terms of a nightmare:

For the next couple of weeks, I endured a living nightmare. The first dosage of Mifeprex, a medication that blocks a hormone needed for a pregnancy to continue, was given to me in pill form at the clinic. When I got home, I inserted four tablets of Misoprostol vaginally. These two medications combined to terminate the pregnancy non-surgically. Heavy bleeding for up to two weeks was expected.

I didn't realize the horrible truth of that statement until I lay awake at night in fits of unbearable pain, bleeding through sanitary napkins by the hour. When I was in the bathroom one night, clumps of bloody tissue and embryonic remains fell into the toilet. I was overcome with tremors, my body shaking with a burst of heat resembling fever. My cheeks flushed as sweat bled into my hairline. Dragging my feet on the cold alabaster floor, I went back to bed and hid under the covers. Eyes

open and blood shot, knees
to my chest, I felt tears sting
my swollen cheeks. After
hours of pure exhaustion, I
finally fell asleep.

Returning to the clinic
several days later for
scheduled follow-up, I
learned that the gestational
sac was still intact. I was
given another dose of
Mifeprex and Misoprostol.
That night, I stared in horror
as a clump of tissue the size
of a baseball escaped from
my body. I held this bloody
mass in my hand, feeling the
watery red liquid drip from
my fingers. The tissue was
soft and pliable.

Poking at the flesh, I
imagined the life that it
embodied. The sac looked
like a bleeding pig's heart.
For several months after, I
was unable to look at blood
without vomiting. (7)

Pro-choice author Jennifer
Baumgardner, who started the “I
Had an Abortion” T-shirt campaign,
let a woman who had had a medical

abortion (by pill) tell her story in her book *Abortion & Life*:

As for the actual abortion, I was just lying on my bed, trying to read, when the cramping came on. It was one of the most painful experiences I've ever been through. I just felt like my insides were tearing themselves apart. I felt so alone and I didn't know what to do. At a certain point, I passed out from the pain. (8)

A woman who had a medical abortion in 2002 shared her experience with the pro-life website [Pregnant Pause](#). She says:

The pain made me scream in tortuous wails. I lay on my boyfriend's couch, the first night alone, and writhed, twisted and contorted my body praying that either I would die or the pain would stop. I called the emergency number they gave me and told them that the pain killers were not working. They said very callously that there was nothing more

they could do for me, informing me that this is normal and to just wait it out. After two nights of what I thought would end this nightmare I began to bleed, a little. On the third day after the contractions I passed the first “tissue” mass. I thought, that’s it, it’s over, now I can begin to heal, right? WRONG!!!!!!

About one and a half weeks later while watching TV I began to feel very ill, and began to cramp up again. Thinking this must be normal (yeah right), at first I thought nothing of it. Within two hours I began to bleed very heavily. The bleeding became increasing worse; eventually I couldn’t get off the toilet. I began to pass blood clots the size of golf balls, and yet another fleshy mass. The cramps became contraction and the bleeding became uncontrollable, I went through a pack of maximum strength maxi pads inside of 12 hours. While sleeping the first night I ruined three pairs of

P.J. pants. I again called the emergency number the clinic provided me with and they said it was normal and to just wait it out.

The next day the bleeding was still relentless and the pain only bearable because I was still breathing. I called the clinic, again, and they told me that the doctor said it was a “delayed abortion”. There was still nothing they could do and it was normal. I lay all day bleeding, crying and thinking I must be crazy. As the day progressed it became increasingly hard for me to get up and walk to the bathroom. I began to pass out if I stood up. It finally got to the point that my boyfriend had to carry me to the bathroom, because I could no longer stand. Again we called the emergency number and they said if it was that bad I needed to come in. I asked them how they propose I do that since I cannot be more than 5 minutes away from a bathroom, and when I stand up I pass out. At this point I

was distressed and angry that I had to endure such suffering, but at the same time I thought maybe I deserved it. After all, it was my fault and my choice not to keep this baby. I knew it was God punishing me for killing one of his children. Even though my boyfriend, Tom, didn't want the baby, it was my body, my choice, my suffering, and my consequences.

I called my regular GYN and described the situation to him, he said I needed to go to the emergency room immediately. Upon arrival at the ER they put me in a wheel chair and I waited no more than 10 minutes before I was blood-soaked from the waist down. They rushed me through triage, where they discovered my blood pressure was roughly 60 over 52. The doctors met me in my room where they immediately put me on I.V. fluids and drew blood. I described what was happening over the last 24 hours and the events that

had led up to my visit in the ER. The next 12 hours were degrading, humiliating, painful, stressful, and virtually unbearable.

She needed two pints of blood and a D&C and was told that if she had not come to the emergency room, she would have died. This woman, identified only as Jennifer, shared her story as a warning to other women who might be tempted to have an RU-486 abortion. She now regrets the abortion – not only because of its painful aftermath, but because of the loss of her child.

A sixteen-year-old girl describes her RU-486 abortion on the same pro-life website:

All of a sudden i started to be sick, so I lay down to try and go sleep but it was impossible, the stomach cramps were unbearable. It was the worst thing to happen in my life. My boyfriend stayed with me until they said I could go home.

Still to this day the

memories of those days
remain in my head, like it's
all a nightmare and I can't
wake up. I regret making the
decision of abortion. If i
could turn back time I
would.

RU-486 maker Edouard Sakiz spoke
frankly when called the abortion
process “an appalling psychological
ordeal” (9).

RU-486 abortions have killed a
number of women in the United
States and worldwide. Its trials in
the United States, which were
conducted by Planned Parenthood,
were filled with deceit. From the
Waterloo Courier:

Dr. Mark Louviere is an
emergency room physician
in Iowa. He treated a woman
in shock from severe blood
loss due to an incomplete
abortion. Informed that she
had been part of the RU-486
clinical trial at Planned
Parenthood in Des Moines,
Dr. Louviere notified the
clinical trial's director and
sent the patient's medical
records to be included in the

study. Yet the trial's report claimed no complications [were] reported among the 238 women who would end unwanted pregnancies without surgery.

If near death due to loss of half one's blood volume, surgery, and a transfusion of four units of blood do not qualify as a complication, I don't know what does. (10)

Even some abortionists have expressed concern about the dangers of RU-486. For example, in this interview:

Interviewer: The most recent controversy to the abortion rights activists is that the FDA is now talking about limiting RU-486's access when it does become available, by requiring special licensing of those dispensing the pill and that they be within a certain distance of a hospital. Do you think these proposed hurdles are justified?

Abortionist: yes, to some

extent. If a patient begins to bleed heavily during a medical abortion, the patient might need surgical intervention. The uterus needs to be evacuated so we can clamp down and stop the bleeding. If everyone out there is prescribing RU-486 to people who do not have surgical access, then there's bound to be some kind of a problem. (11)

Naturally, Planned Parenthood opposes all these regulations.

Planned Parenthood has taken many opportunities, in fact, to cut corners in providing the drug. Several former employees have discussed their plan of providing "telemed" abortions, where the physician does not even examine the woman and does not have to be in the building when she is given the pills. Another common practice is using the abortion pill for pregnancies of 8-9 weeks instead of stopping at the recommended limitation of seven weeks. One woman, who owns three abortion clinics, cuts costs further by offering lower doses of RU-486 and fewer pills, despite the fact that this lower

dose may not be effective:

Now, clinics are grappling with the mifepristone dilemma. Owners feel they have to offer the recently approved abortion pill, formerly known as RU-486, because women are asking for it and seem to expect it. But its price — \$270 for three pills — will be a problem. Many owners say that if they charge what it costs to provide the three pills plus the three office visits, the lab work, and the counseling, they will lose customers to competitors who say they will keep the price much lower.

Some have found creative solutions. Ms. Chelian said she is considering offering women just one pill instead of three and to have them sign a form saying they understand that one pill is not the approved dose but that studies have shown that one pill is effective. Then she can charge them just \$80 more than for a

RU-486 is far from the safe and easy method pro-choice activists claim it is.

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