How Abortion is Provided
* Ends a pregnancy before birth takes place
  – Miscarriage/Spontaneous abortion - embryo or fetus dies in the uterus and is expelled by the body
  – Ending a pregnancy voluntarily - induced abortion
  – Approx. 88 % of all abortions are performed during the first trimester
  – Typically performed at a clinic, health center, or in a doctor's office.
  – Women are usually able to return home an hour or so later

History of Abortion in the U.S.
* Mid-1800's: Prior to 20 weeks was legal
* 1900's: Physicians joined with other groups - stating untrained people were performing them.
  All states made abortion illegal
* 1973: Roe versus Wade
  – Supreme Court ruled:
  • Pregnancy divided into 3 trimesters
    – 1st trimester - up to women & doctor
    – 2nd trimester - state may regulate
    – 3rd trimester - state may regulate and bar all abortions that are not life threatening to mother

Moral Considerations
* Pro-life: Fertilized egg is a human being from the moment of conception & therefore an abortion is murder.
  – Any women having sex knows pregnancy is possible - she has a moral obligation
  – Women unable or unwilling to raise the children should consider placing him/her up for adoption
  – Abortion has destructive effects on our traditional morals and values

Moral Considerations
* Pro-Choice: There are distinct stages of fetal development and that preserving the fetus early in pregnancy
  is not the ultimate moral concern.
  – Women should have the right to make their own decisions
  – If not legal then unsafe and unregulated practices would occur
  – Women would be divided into those who could afford and those who could not.
  – Some physicians would be forced to break the law

Personal Considerations
* Legal arguments
* Moral arguments
* Short and long term ramifications

Suction Curettage
* Early abortion; about six to 14 weeks after last period
* Vagina is washed with antiseptic. Anesthetic is injected into or near the cervix.
* Cervix is gently and gradually stretched over a 24 hour period.
* After dilation a tube connected to a suction machine gently empties the uterus
* After suction a Curette (narrow metal loop) gently scrapes the walls of the uterus

Surgical Abortion
* Manual Suction Procedure (MVA)
  – Done within 7 weeks of last menstrual cycle
  – Gentle suction of a syringe
  – Cervix is dilated with meds.
  – Uterus is emptied with a handheld syringe
  – If a definitive gestational sac is not identified then women is tested for possible ectopic pregnancy
Abortion After the First Trimester
* After 14 weeks or up to 24th week after last period
* Dilation and Evacuation: D & E
  – Two steps:
    • 1st: Vagina is cleaned with antiseptic
      – Absorbent dilators are inserted
    • 2nd: Pain medications are administered
      – Local anesthetic is injected into or near cervix
      – Fetus and other products are removed by surgical instruments and curettage

Abortion After the First Trimester
* Partial birth abortion
* Induction:
  – Rarely performed
    • Inserts a medication called prostaglandin or urea or salt solution into vagina
    • Causes contractions to begin
    • Causes a stillbirth to occur

Medical Abortion
* Choose to use a combination of drugs to end the pregnancy
  – Doesn’t require surgery
  – Can be used up to 7 weeks after the first day of the last menstrual period
  – 1 to 12% of medical abortions fail
  • surgery is then used
    – Two Types:
      • Methotrexate-Misoprostol Method
        – injection of Meth at doctors office and 5 days later
        insert Miso into the vagina.
        – Pregnancy will terminate within a day or two
      – Mifepristone (RU-486)-Misoprostol Method
        • Swallow a dose of Mife at the doctors office
        • Two days later insert Miso into vagina
        • Pregnancy usually ends within 4 hours
        • Advantages
        • Disadvantages

Risk and Complications
* Infection
* Retained tissue and/or body parts
* Perforation of uterus (D & E)
* Hemorrhaging
* Cervical laceration
* Missed abortion - continued pregnancy, some tissue is removed and yet she remains pregnant
* Postabortal syndrome (blood in the uterus)
* Possible effects on future pregnancies

Danger Signs of Post-Abortion Infections
* Fever above 100° F.
* Abdominal pain or tenderness
* Swelling
* Backache
* Prolonged or Heavy bleeding
* Foul smelling vaginal discharge
* Vomiting
* Fainting
* Delay of 6 or more weeks in resuming menstruation
Psychological Effects
* Possible feels after having an abortion
  – Guilt
  – New strength in having made and carried out an important decision
  – Depression
  – Sense of loss
  – Negative feelings about sex
  – Relationship may end
  – Anger
  – Bitterness

Decisions to Make
* Religious and moral beliefs
* Long-term feelings about the decision
* Partner’s feelings and her ability to deal with his response
* Presence or lack of supportive friends or family
* Availability of medical services and transportation to a facility
* Financial resources