

MILESTONES OF HUMAN LIFE

Day 1: Conception. All 46 human chromosomes present. A unique human life begins.

Day 7: Embryo begins implanting in the uterus.

Day 22: The heart begins to beat with blood often of a different type than the mother's.

Week 5: The eyes, hands and feet begin to develop.

Week 6: Brain waves are detectable. Mouth and lips present.

Week 7: Baby swims freely in the amniotic sac with a natural swimmer's stroke.

Week 8: The beginnings of all body systems are present. Bones begin to form.

Week 9: Baby can suck her thumb, kick, curl her toes and bend her fingers.

Week 10: Baby is sensitive to touch and has eyelids, fingernails and fingerprints.

Week 11: Baby can smile. All organ systems are functioning.

Week 15: Toenails form.

Week 17: Baby can experience dream (REM) sleep.

Week 20: Mother feels movements of the baby.

Week 20-22: Baby reaches point of viability, ie. survival is possible outside the womb without extraordinary measures.

POST-ABORTION SYNDROME (PAS)

The following is used by permission from "What is Post-Abortion Syndrome" by Silent Voices.

While abortion may be perceived by some as an acceptable alternative, most women, at some deep level of their being, realize that abortion is an act against nature. They must "shut down" any maternal instincts they have in order to carry through with an abortion. After the abortion is over, many women are unable to reconcile the fact that they were responsible for the death of their child, and struggle for years with unresolved feelings of guilt and grief.

These women usually struggle with their grief in isolation, and rarely feel free to discuss their abortion experiences with others for fear that they will be condemned or abandoned by those close to them. While many women in the United States are suffering from Post Abortion Syndrome (PAS), most believe that they are alone in their pain - that their negative experience with abortion is unusual or unique - thus compounding their feelings of loneliness and isolation.

When a woman does seek help, or attempts to talk to her friends and family about her experience, she is often met with resistance and a lack of understanding. Counselors, abortion providers, doctors and peers may all tell the woman that she needs to *put her experience behind her, or get on with her life.*

However well meaning this advice may be, a woman struggling with negative feelings after an abortion will find that her feelings will not disappear no matter how hard she tries to forget them. Rather, they often lead to a dysfunctional lifestyle. The woman will simply go on with her life never knowing how to overcome the negative, self-destructive behaviors. Some of these behaviors include:

- despair/helplessness/hopelessness • unhealthy/abusive relationships • sexual dysfunction • depression
- low self-esteem • guilt and/or shame • drug and/or alcohol abuse • frequent bouts of crying • anorexia/bulimia
- nightmares • suicidal thoughts, threats and attempts, and/or preoccupation with death

There are other women who feel that they have not been affected at all by their abortion(s), and are unable to see the connection between other problems in their life, and their abortion experience(s). They have probably learned to cope with their feelings, usually by using "defense mechanisms (denial, repression, suppression, compensatory pregnancy and/or reaction formation)."

Fortunately, there is healing and recovery available for women (and men) suffering from their abortion(s). Silent Voices offers highly effective weekend workshops for women suffering from PAS. They can be reached at 619-422-0757.

Additional organizations that offer post-abortion healing:

Alternatives Pregnancy Care Clinic 760-741-9796 . Birth Choice of San Marcos 760-744-1313

Catholic Charities 619-231-2828 . College Area Pregnancy Center 619-526-5433

Pregnancy Care Center 619-422-4357 . Pregnancy Resource Center 760-945-4673

Rachel's Hope 858-581-3022 . Ramona Pregnancy Care Clinic 760-789-7059