

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

MEDICAL TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY

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- Intentional or voluntary termination of pregnancy before full term is called **medical termination of pregnancy** (MTP) or induced abortion. Nearly 45 to 50 million MTPs are performed in a year all over the world which accounts to 1/5th of the total number of conceived pregnancies in a year. Obviously, MTP has a significant role in decreasing the population though it is not meant for that purpose. Whether to accept / legalise MTP or not is being debated upon in many countries due to emotional, ethical, religious and social issues involved in it. Government of India legalised MTP in 1971 with some strict conditions to avoid its misuse. Such restrictions are all the more important to check indiscriminate and illegal female foeticides which are reported to be high in India.
- MTP is performed to get rid of unwanted pregnancies either due to casual unprotected intercourse or failure of the contraceptive used during coitus or rapes. MTPs are also essential in certain cases where continuation of the pregnancy could be harmful or even fatal either to the mother or to the foetus or both. MTPs are considered relatively safe during the first trimester, i.e., upto 12 weeks of pregnancy. Second trimester abortions are much more riskier. One disturbing trend observed is that a majority of the MTPs are performed illegally by unqualified quacks which are not only unsafe but could be fatal too.
- Another dangerous trend is the misuse of amniocentesis to determine the sex of the unborn child. Frequently, if the foetus is found to be female, it is followed by MTP- this is totally against what is legal. Such practices should be avoided because these are dangerous both for the young mother and the foetus. Effective counselling on the need to avoid unprotected coitus and the risk factors involved in illegal abortions as well as providing more health care facilities could reverse the mentioned unhealthy trend.

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- Government of India legalised MTP in 1971 with some strict conditions to avoid its misuse.
- Why MTP? Obviously the answer is—to get rid of unwanted pregnancies either due to casual unprotected intercourse or failure of the contraceptive used during coitus or rapes.
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- MTPs are considered relatively safe during the first trimester, i.e., upto 12 weeks of pregnancy. However legal limit is upto 20 week.
- Second trimester abortions are much more riskier.