

# WHY WE DON'T NEED ABORTION

(even for the 'hard cases')



# Introduction

Pro-abortion advocates will use any excuse to justify abortion.

They often use unfortunate scenarios, sometimes called the “hard cases,” to convince people that abortion is necessary. These circumstances generate so much emotion that oftentimes pro-lifers struggle to respond. Most pro-life legislation even contains exceptions for these scenarios—leaving some pre-born children unprotected.

The three “hard cases” in this book cover situations when the mother became pregnant through rape or incest, when the child has a disability, and when the mother’s life is endangered because of pregnancy.

Abortion is never necessary. While some circumstances may be unfortunate, none justify killing a child. This book explains why, and then offers a pro-life response.



# Contents

<i>3</i>	<b>Abortion for Cases of Rape or Incest</b>
<i>6</i>	<b>Abortion for Cases of Fetal Abnormalities</b>
<i>8</i>	<b>Abortion When the Mother's Life is at Risk</b>
<i>13</i>	<b>Conclusion</b>
<i>15</i>	<b>Resources</b>

# Abortion for Cases of Rape or Incest

We all feel deep sympathy for any woman who has been a victim of rape or incest. However, the emotional nature of the circumstance often clouds judgment about the reality of abortion. Abortion does not erase the act of aggression.<sup>1</sup>

The tragedy in these cases is the rape or the incest itself — not the child. There is also evidence that victims of rape who get abortions later regret this decision. However, victims of rape who deliver their child do not regret their choice.

One article cites an Elliot Institute study of 192 women, who conceived from rape or incest. This study found that,

*“Nearly 80% of the women who aborted the pregnancy reported that abortion had been the wrong solution.”  
However, “None of the women who gave birth to a child conceived in sexual assault expressed regret or wished they had aborted instead.”<sup>2</sup>*

Here are some ways to respond to rape from a pro-life perspective:



## Acknowledge The Crime

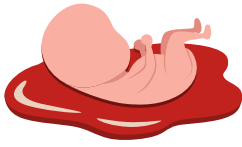
The woman is a victim of a heinous, violent act. Rape causes awful physical and psychological trauma. Both rape and incest are terrible and horrific crimes against the woman that cause great suffering.

## Affirm That The Child Is An Innocent Person

He or she is a victim, just like the mother. Rape violates the sacred dignity of the sexual act itself, but it has no bearing on the sacred dignity of the new life.



## Address The Reality Of Abortion



Abortion kills a child. Abortion after rape only wreaks more violence. It provides no genuine healing, and it leads people to believe that the “problem” of the rape has largely been solved.

## Aid The Mother

Care for the victim so that she experiences true physical and emotional healing. If she is stuck in abuse, as in the case of incest, help the victim escape this abusive situation so she can find the psychological and physical healing she needs.

Rape causes psychological damage that can last for a lifetime, not to mention potential physical harm. Abortion only causes further psychological damage and physical harm.



### Psychological Effects Of Rape:

- Self-blame
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Guilt
- Eating disorders
- Depression
- Flashbacks.<sup>3</sup>

### Psychological Effects Of Abortion:

- Suicidal thoughts
- Post-Abortion Stress Syndrome (similar to PTSD)
- Guilt
- Eating disorders
- Anxiety
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Inability to bond with future children.<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, abortion and rape cause similar psychological effects. Abortion won't make the aftermath of rape disappear. It will likely make the psychological effects worse since the woman will endure two horrific violations of her body and will lose her child.

*note :*

*Some people argue that a child conceived from incest will have fetal abnormalities. They state that this should be grounds for legal abortion. You can respond to this argument using the principles covered in the next section of this book: “Cases of Fetal Abnormalities.”*

David Reardon Ph.D. draws this comparison:

*“[M]any women have described their abortions as being similar to a rape (and even used the term “medical rape”), it is easy to see that abortion is likely to add a second trauma to the earlier trauma of sexual assault.*



“Abortion involves an often painful intrusion into a woman’s sexual organs by a masked stranger who is invading her body. Once she is on the operating table, she loses control over her body. Even if she protests and asks the abortionist to stop, chances are she will be either ignored or told that it’s too late to stop the abortion.

“For many women, this experiential association between abortion and sexual assault is very strong. It is especially strong for women who have a prior history of sexual assault, whether or not the aborted child was conceived during an act of assault.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Prosecute The Rapist**

The problem is not the child. The problem is that a woman was raped in the first place. With incest, even after an abortion, which does nothing to heal the trauma, the criminal is still close by! In fact, it is often the aggressor who insists upon the abortion to cover up his own crimes.

Abortion allows the rapist a better chance of continuing to commit crimes. The solution to rape is not abortion, but the prosecution of the rapist so he does not do any more damage.

In sum, rape and incest, don't ever justify abortion. The baby is a victim too; he or she deserves to be cherished and nurtured, just like the woman who was a victim of such terrible crimes. The loving response is always to accept life and take care of the baby, as well as the mother.<sup>6</sup>



# Abortion for Cases of Fetal Abnormalities

At first, this exception may seem to make sense. The intention—theoretically—is to spare a child pain and suffering. But is abortion really the merciful option?

The answer is definitely **no**.  
*So how should pro-lifers respond to this argument?*

## Explain That “Mercy Killings” Do Not Exist

This is just a nice name for killing suffering people, so the healthy ones don’t have to deal with them. This is true of assisted suicide and euthanasia, as well as abortion for birth defects.

The concept of “mercy killing” treats all people with physical hardships like “burdens” that are unworthy of life.

## Affirm That The Loving Response Is To Let The Child Live

When birth defects do happen, cherish these children for as long as they live.

Is it better for a child to be torn apart by an abortionist’s instruments or die in the loving arms of his parents? The answer should be clear. A merciful parent will love their child for as long as he or she naturally lives.

## Stress The Dangers Of This Philosophy

The mentality behind these abortions is about convenience. This logic involves getting rid of people with physical defects so the rest of us can avoid the responsibility of caring for them. This is the eugenic logic of the Nazis. Do we really want that type of society?



## Bring Up Examples Of People With Disabilities Who Are Happy With Their Lives

Many people who live with disabilities love their life. There are numerous examples of people with various disabilities—such as autism, Down syndrome, and cerebral palsy—living full and happy lives. These stories can help reassure parents. Individuals with disabilities love their lives—their child will too!

*for example*

*Babies with Down Syndrome are often targets of this eugenic mindset.*

*One study showed that 99% of people with Down Syndrome were happy with their lives, making them the happiest identifiable group of human beings in the world. This same study showed that 97% liked who they are, 96% liked how they look, and 86% easily made friends.<sup>7</sup>*

*Yet 90% or more of all prenatal diagnoses of Down syndrome end in abortion.<sup>8</sup> Some countries, like Iceland, boast that they have nearly eliminated Down Syndrome when all they've really done is killed people with Down syndrome by abortion!<sup>9</sup>*



Clearly, there is nothing “merciful” about killing these people before they are born. In every situation, whether or not there are birth defects, the child is an individual human, who is worthy of love.

In the book of Jeremiah, God said, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you came to birth, I consecrated you.”<sup>10</sup>

Disabilities don’t make anyone less worthy of life, and children with disabilities are gifts from God.





# Abortion When the Mother's Life is at Risk

Many people use this argument to justify abortion. But the truth is, abortion is never necessary to save the life of a mother in any known medical context—*but it always kills a child.*

Even abortionists have testified that abortion won't save a mother's life. For example, in the 1970s, Planned Parenthood's Alan Guttmacher commented,



*“Today it is possible for almost any patient to be brought through pregnancy alive, unless she suffers from a fatal disease such as cancer or leukemia, and if so, abortion would be unlikely to prolong, much less save the life.”<sup>11</sup>*

This statement is all the stronger because of the medical advances made since that time.

*So, how should pro-lifers respond to this argument?*

First, understand this distinction: **Some medical procedures to save a mother's life may indirectly and unintentionally cause the death of her child.**

Sometimes, a woman's life may be put at risk by a pregnancy. In such cases, if there is no way to save both the baby and the mother, it is morally permissible to perform an operation that saves the mother but indirectly results in the death of the baby.

**This is not an abortion; no one is killing the baby on purpose.**

This kind of procedure is permissible because no evil is directly intended or performed. It falls under the Principle of Double Effect.

### The Principle of Double Effect

1. The goal of the surgery itself must be good or at least morally neutral.
2. The good effect must not come about as a result of the evil effect, but must come directly from the good action. The good effect (saving the mother's life) is not caused by the bad effect (the death of the pre-born child).
3. The evil effect must not be desired in itself but only permitted if there is no other choice.
4. There must be a sufficiently grave reason for permitting the evil effect to occur.<sup>12</sup>



*So, how does this apply to specific medical conditions?*

When a woman has an ectopic pregnancy, her child gets stuck in her Fallopian tube and begins growing there. As he or she grows, the tube will rupture. This will kill the child and likely the mother as well. It is permissible to remove the Fallopian tube even though the child will die. This is how the Principle of Double Effect applies:

1. In this case, the goal of the surgery is to remove a pathological organ which presents an imminent threat to the life of the woman—a good goal.
2. In this case, the surgery intended to heal is the good action. The woman is not healed because of the death of her unborn child. She is healed by the removal of part of her Fallopian tube.
3. The baby's death must be an unintended and unwanted side-effect.
4. The ectopic pregnancy must threaten the mother's life AND there must be no other ethical options of treatment.<sup>13</sup>



The same logic can be used for other medical scenarios that a mother may encounter:

### Infected Placenta or an Infected Uterus

The Principle of Double Effect applies to the removal of an infected placenta or uterus, whether by surgery or pre-viable induction.<sup>14</sup> The issue, in this case, is the infected organ, and its removal will save the life of the mother. Again, this surgery is a good action, and the death of the child is an unintended side effect.



### Pre-eclampsia

When a woman has pre-eclampsia, she has high blood pressure because of her pregnancy. It's likely linked to placenta development, and there are many potentially fatal complications that can occur if this high blood pressure is not treated. Generally, the baby must be delivered early.<sup>15</sup>



If a child is not yet viable, early delivery of the child is the same as abortion. Intentionally removing a child from his or her mother, when this child cannot survive outside the womb, is directly intending the death of the child.<sup>16</sup> However, pre-eclampsia can be treated with medication until the child reaches the point of viability.<sup>17</sup>

If the baby is viable (able to survive outside the womb), he or she may be delivered if there is a “proportionate medical condition.”<sup>18</sup> Basically, if the mother’s life is in danger and the child is viable, he or she may be delivered early. However, the doctor must do everything possible to help the baby survive once he or she is born.<sup>19</sup>

## Miscarriage

If a pregnant woman miscarries, sometimes her body will not properly expel the dead child. This leaves the mother at risk for infection, which may become life-threatening. In that case, a doctor may perform a procedure similar to an early surgical abortion to remove all the fetal parts. This is **NOT** abortion, because the child has already died. The doctor is not causing the child's death.



*These examples demonstrate how abortion (the direct killing of an unborn child) is never necessary to save the life of the mother.*

Any physical scenario that a mother may encounter can be dealt with medically, by following the Principle of Double Effect or by inducing labor if the child is viable. None of the scenarios call for an abortion of the child. In fact, an abortion might make these situations worse!<sup>20</sup>

The good news is that medical advances have greatly lowered the age of viability. 24 weeks is generally considered the point of potential viability.<sup>21</sup> This means that most conditions do not become serious (necessitating early delivery) until the child is viable.<sup>22</sup>



Sometimes, pro-abortion advocates also argue that abortion is necessary for the physical or mental health of the mother. If someone makes this claim, you can explain that abortion itself is dangerous for the health of the mother. It has physical and psychological repercussions.



#### Physical Side Effects of Abortion:

- Bleeding
- Cramping
- Uterine damage
- Many other physical health issues.<sup>23</sup>

#### Psychological Side Effects of Abortion:

- Flashbacks
- Nightmares
- PTSD symptoms
- Guilt
- Anxiety
- Substance abuse
- Suicidal thoughts.<sup>24</sup>



*Clearly, abortion is never necessary to save the life of a mother.*

Moreover, abortion has disastrous effects on a woman's health. Pro-lifers must oppose this tactic and affirm that no direct abortion intended to kill a pre-born baby is ever necessary to save the life of a mother.

# Conclusion

Pro-abortion advocates use the three scenarios discussed in this book to gradually justify abortion on demand.

First, they bring up the “hard cases”. Then, they argue that in this very specific scenario, abortion is necessary. Finally, they use this specific case to justify abortion in every situation.

Be aware that pro-abortion advocates often exaggerate how common these cases are. The scenarios covered in this book are extremely rare. All together they account for less than 4% of all abortions.<sup>25</sup> Still, pro-abortion groups use these rare scenarios to justify the other 96% of abortions.

This has happened time and again in many countries. Abortion is legalized for rape and incest, fetal abnormalities, and the life of the mother. Then abortion is allowed for general “health” (always vaguely defined). Finally, countries legalize abortion on demand.<sup>26</sup>



## *U.S. abortion laws timeline*

*1910: All states in the United States have laws against abortion.* <sup>27</sup>

*1959: American Law Institute proposes exceptions allowing abortion for the health of mother, fetal abnormalities, and in cases of rape.*

*1967: Abortion is legalized for these scenarios in Colorado, California, Oregon, and North Carolina.*

*1972: Thirteen states allow abortion only for health of mother, fetal abnormalities, and cases of rape. One state permits abortion only in cases of rape or incest, and one state allows abortion to preserve the physical health of the mother. Thirty-one states permit abortion for the life of the mother. Four states have legalized abortion on demand.*

*1973: Roe v. Wade allows abortions in 1st trimester. Abortion can be regulated by states in 2nd and 3rd trimesters, but there must be exceptions for the health of the mother. The same day, Doe v. Bolton broadly and vaguely defines “health,” which ushers in an era of abortion on demand.* <sup>28</sup>



*Life is always the  
right choice, even in  
the most difficult  
circumstances.*

*Armed with this knowledge, and with much compassion, you can  
help people to understand why abortion is never the answer.*

# Resources

- [1] Clowes Ph.D., Brian. “Shouldn’t We Allow Abortions to Help Victims of Incest?” Human Life International. 19 May 2017. <https://www.hli.org/resources/shouldnt-allow-abortions-help-victims-incest/>
- [2] “Sexual Assault Pregnancy and Abortion: What the Research Says” AfterAbortion.org. Elliot Institute. <https://afterabortion.org/sexual-assault-and-abortion-survey/>
- [3] Gluck, Samantha.” Effects of Rape: Psychological and Physical Effects of Rape.” HealthyPlace. 22 Jan 2022. <https://www.healthypace.com/abuse/rape/effects-of-rape-psychological-and-physical-effects-of-rape>
- [4] HLI Staff. “The Risks of Abortion.” Human Life International. 11 Aug 2021. <https://www.hli.org/resources/risks-of-abortion/>
- [5] Reardon Ph.D., David C. “Rape, Incest and Abortion: Searching Beyond the Myths.” AfterAbortion.org, Elliot Institute. Originally published in *The Post-Abortion Review* 2(1) Winter 1998. Copyright 1998 Elliot Institute. <https://afterabortion.org/rape-incest-and-abortion-searching-beyond-the-myths-3/>
- [6] Clowes Ph.D., Brian. “Shouldn’t We Allow Abortions to Help Victims of Rape?” Human Life International. 26 May 2021. <https://www.hli.org/resources/shouldnt-allow-abortions-help-victims-rape/>
- [7] Skotko, Brian G., Levine, Susan P., and Goldstein, Richard. “Self-Perceptions from People with Down Syndrome.” *American Journal of Medical Genetics*, 2011 [Part A]. Published online 9 Sep 2011. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3740159/>
- [8] Clowes Ph.D., Brian. “Shouldn’t Abortion be Allowed for Serious or Fatal Birth Defects?” Human Life International. 7 Apr 2021. <https://www.hli.org/resources/abortion-serious-fatal-birth-defects/>
- [9] Quinones, Julian. Lajka, Arijeta. “What kind of society do you want to live in?: Inside the country where Down syndrome is disappearing.” CBS News. 15 Aug 2017. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/down-syndrome-iceland/>
- [10] Jeremiah 1:5
- [11] Alan Guttmacher. “Abortion Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow.” *The Case for Legalized Abortion Now*. Berkeley, California: Diablo Books, 1967, page 3.
- [12] Clowes Ph.D., Brian. “What is the Principle of ‘Double Effect?’” Human Life International. 24 May 2017. <https://www.hli.org/resources/principle-double-effect/>
- [13] Ibid.
- [14] Di Camillo, John A., Zalot, Jozef D. “Medical Interventions During Pregnancy in Light of Dobbs.” *Ethics & Medics: A Commentary of the National Catholic Bioethics Center on Health Care and the Life Sciences*. Vol. 47, Number 8. Aug 2022. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e3adala6a2e8d6a131d1dcd/t/6303d466a8e665346d8a0069/1661195367913/E%26MAugust22%28correx%29FINAL.pdf>
- [15] Mayo Clinic Staff. “Pre-Eclampsia: Symptoms and Causes.” Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/preeclampsia/symptoms-causes/syc-20355745>



- [16] Di Camillo, John A., Zalot, Jozef D. “Medical Interventions During Pregnancy in Light of Dobbs.” *Ethics & Medics: A Commentary of the National Catholic Bioethics Center on Health Care and the Life Sciences*. Vol. 47, Number 8. Aug 2022. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e3adala6a2e8d6a131d1dcd/t/6303d466a8e665346d8a0069/1661195367913/E%26MAugust22%28correx%29FINAL.pdf>
- [17] Mayo Clinic Staff. “Pre-Eclampsia: Diagnosis and Treatment.” Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/preeclampsia/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20355751>
- [18] Di Camillo, John A., Zalot, Jozef D. “Medical Interventions During Pregnancy in Light of Dobbs.” *Ethics & Medics: A Commentary of the National Catholic Bioethics Center on Health Care and the Life Sciences*. Vol. 47, Number 8. Aug 2022. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e3adala6a2e8d6a131d1dcd/t/6303d466a8e665346d8a0069/1661195367913/E%26MAugust22%28correx%29FINAL.pdf>
- [19] Ibid.
- [20] HLI Staff. “What Percentage of Abortions are Medically Necessary?” Human Life International. 1 Oct 2021. <https://www.hli.org/resources/what-percentage-of-abortions-are-medically-necessary/>
- [21] Taylor, Marygrace. “What is the Age of Fetal Viability?” What to Expect. Medically Reviewed by Andrei Rebarber, M.D. on August 2, 2021. <https://www.whattoexpect.com/first-year/preemies/fetal-viability>
- [22] “OB/GYN Talks Conversion and ‘Life of Mother’ Exception” Living a Culture of Life Podcast from Human Life International. Youtube. Uploaded 13 Oct 2022. Video. <https://youtu.be/gQCGT0dwzSk>
- [23] Report of the South Dakota Task Force to Study Abortion. Dec. 2005. <http://www.dakotavoices.com/Docs/South%20Dakota%20Abortion%20Task%20Force%20Report.pdf>
- [24] “Post-Abortion Syndrome” Pregnancy Care Center. 7 June 2017. <https://pccchandler.com/post-abortion-syndrome/>
- [25] HLI Staff. “Why Women Abort.” Human Life International. 5 May 2021. Reasons Women Get Abortions [Recently Updated] (hli.org)
- [26] Clowes Ph.D., Brian. “Can Abortion Preserve a Woman’s Physical Health?” Human Life International. 21 May 2017. <https://www.hli.org/resources/support-abortion-preserve-womans-physical-health/>
- [27] Folsom, Cate; Smith, Sherman. “A timeline of abortion law in the United States.” News From the States. 24 June 2022. <https://www.newsfromthestates.com/article/timeline-abortion-law-united-states>
- [28] “Abortion History Timeline.” National Right to Life. <https://www.nrlc.org/abortion/history/>

**FOR MORE FREE PRO-LIFE  
RESOURCES, VISIT:**

*[www.hli.org/resources](http://www.hli.org/resources)*