

Info Sheet

ON ACCESS TO ABORTION CARE FOR REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE (June 2024)

In Hungary only surgical abortion is available. Medical abortion, which is accessible in Ukraine, is not an option here.

Abortion can be performed until **12 weeks** of pregnancy (18 weeks of gestation under the age of 18¹), in the following cases:

- the pregnancy is the result of violence,
- if the pregnancy is endangering the health of the mother, or
- the foetus is likely to have serious disability or impairment.
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These are determined by healthcare providers and abortion care is free of charge.

Pregnancy can be terminated until week 12 of pregnancy also if the woman is in a serious crisis. This does not need to be certified by a healthcare provider or any professional.

If a woman considers that having a child would cause a serious crisis in her life, she can decide to terminate her pregnancy herself.

In this case, you will have to attend two counseling sessions at the Family Protection Service and, in some cases, you will have to pay a fee for the abortion.

Cost of abortion care

Abortion care is free of charge for women with a temporary protection status. According to the [specific order of the EMMI No. 9/2022 \(III./11.\)](#)

"Temporary protection status holders are entitled to free prenatal care and obstetric care, and to abortion care in accordance with the conditions listed in the Act on the Protection of Fetal Life, as well as to the counseling provided by the Family Protection Service, and to request the termination of pregnancy".

Those dual citizens, who have verifiably arrived to Hungary after 24 February 2022 and do not have a permanent residence in Hungary, are considered the same way as temporary protection status holders. According to the [specific order of the EMMI No. 9/2022 \(III./11.\)](#), they are entitled to abortion care free of charge, just like those with a temporary protection status.

¹ There might be other reasons for requesting an abortion after the 12th week of pregnancy, as regulated by the [Act LXXIX of 1992 on the Protection of Fetal Life](#).

Point 3 of Annex 1 states that:

"(...) a Hungarian citizen with a permanent residence in Ukraine and having arrived from Ukraine on or after 24 February 2022 is treated the same way as those who have applied for or received temporary protection status, with regards to access health care".

Dual citizens who already have a permanent residence in Hungary, are not considered the same as temporary protection status holders. Abortion care is not free for them - just like for Hungarian citizens. The fee of abortion care is 45.312,-Ft (as of 2024), but in certain cases the amount can be fully or partially reduced, for example in the case of a bad financial situation, which needs to be supported by documents in accordance with [Regulation 32/1992. \(XII. 23.\)](#), or if the woman lives in a refugee or homeless shelter. The procedure is done only after the fee has been paid.

The process of abortion

The first gynecological exam

The first step is a gynecological exam to confirm the pregnancy. This exam should take place on week 6-8 of pregnancy, because fetal heartbeat can be detected from this time. In 2022 a regulation was passed, according to which doctors must provide women with "a clearly identifiable indication of fetal vital signs". Nurses of the Family Protection Service can only accept a medical record that includes this information to apply for abortion. So if the exam takes place before week 6 when the doctor can not yet demonstrate fetal vital signs, then the woman must return for another gynecological exam. It is better to avoid that.

Abortion care is a time-sensitive process. Since pre-operative counseling and exams take 2-3 weeks, it is easy to miss the 12 weeks required by law. This is why it is important to manage the time available well. So when someone makes an appointment for the first examination, it should be made clear that it is an emergency, avoiding waiting weeks for the examination. The appointment should be booked at the local clinic.

First visit at the Family Protection Service (Családvédelmi Szolgálat, CsVSz)

Family Protection Services do not have territorial jurisdiction, meaning that any of their offices can be contacted regardless of the place of residence, but it is important to book an appointment with them in any case. The address and telephone number are available online, but you can also ask the doctor at the gynecological exam. It's good to know that Family Protection Service can be called for an appointment on weekdays, within a narrow 30-60 minute time slot. If you book an appointment in person, this interval is wider.

The aim of the first counseling session - pursuant to relevant legislation - is for the woman to

keep the pregnancy. To do this, the nurse will inform the woman about subsidies available if she carries the pregnancy to term, or what options are available for adoption. She also provides information on the development of the foetus, the risks of abortion and the impact it may have on the subsequent pregnancy.

The first counseling session will be certified by the Family Protection Service. This must be presented at the next session, which can be at the earliest 3 days after the first counseling session.

Second visit at the Family Protection Service

The second counseling session is about the procedure itself, about when, where and through what method it will take place. Family planning options and available contraception methods are also discussed.

At this counseling session, an application for termination of pregnancy is filled in, the original of which is given to the applicant and a copy is sent by the nurse to the hospital of choice. After the second counseling session, you must visit the hospital within 8 days.

Visit the hospital where the abortion would be performed

At the hospital, the woman will be examined (another gynecological examination, laboratory tests, anesthesiological examination) and a date for the operation will be scheduled. The operation is performed under general anesthesia and on an outpatient basis, i.e. you can go home on the day of the operation.

Useful information

It is important to highlight that a woman can change her mind even on the day of surgery! Also, it is possible to get pregnant within two weeks after the operation, so it is advisable to prepare for contraception at the same time as the operation. For women in poor social conditions or in humanitarian crisis, the professional recommendation is to use intrauterine contraceptives (IUDs), which provide long-term protection against unwanted pregnancies.

We have found that sometimes health providers do not attend to patients who do not speak Hungarian (or English). Providers can call the telephone interpretation service by dialing 1812. Language should not be a barrier to get care!

If the pregnant woman would like to hire an interpreter herself, we recommend the [IOM's interpretation service](#) or the [telephone interpreting service](#) of the Dévai Community Center. In both cases it is necessary to make an appointment in advance. In both cases the service is free of charge for Ukrainian refugees.

Useful links:

1. [Special instruction of the Minister of Human Resources on health care for persons arriving from Ukraine](#)
2. [LXXIX of 1992 law on the protection of fetal life](#)
3. [32/1992. \(XII. 23.\) NM decree LXXIX of 1992 on the protection of fetal life. on the implementation of the law](#)
4. [Information about abortion](#)
5. [Information about the Family Protection Service](#)
6. [Address list of Family Protection Services \(CSVSZ\) operating in the area of competence of the Department of Public Health of the Budapest Capital Government Office](#)
7. [Sample letter to promote free and subsidized healthcare for refugees from Ukraine by the Hungarian Helsinki Committee](#)
8. [Temporary protection card extended until 2025](#)
9. [IOM Interpretation Services](#)

