

National Council of Jewish Women

# Medication abortion and Jewish values



## WHAT IS MEDICATION ABORTION?

Medication abortion usually involves two different medications: **mifepristone and misoprostol**. Mifepristone is taken first, and temporarily blocks the production of progesterone, an essential hormone in pregnancy development. 24-48 hours later, misoprostol is taken to induce contractions and expel the contents of the uterus. **Self-managed abortion offers both dignity and equity by enabling more privacy and greater agency, as well as providing a critical path for those who most often experience barriers to care.**



## IS IT SAFE AND EFFECTIVE?

Both mifepristone and misoprostol have been approved by the FDA for more than 20 years, and studies show that both are **safer than Tylenol and penicillin!**

Medication abortion is used worldwide, and has a track record of **98% effectiveness.**



## HOW COMMON IS IT?

Very! According to the Guttmacher Institute, medication abortion accounted for **53% of all abortions** in the United States in 2020. As more states enact abortion bans and restrictions and travel to clinics gets more difficult, access to medication abortion will be even more important.



## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Despite decades of research showing that medication abortion is safe and effective, anti-abortion activists are attempting to use the court system to overturn FDA approval of mifepristone. This is a **political action with no grounding** in medical science.



## WHY IS THIS A JEWISH ISSUE?

Jewish tradition teaches us that medical abortions are a valid method of care. In the 12th century, the Jewish scholar Maimonides wrote that when abortion takes place, it can be done "surgically or with drugs." In the 17th century, when Rabbi Yehuda ibn Ayyash of Algiers was asked if women who "make a medication known to terminate a child" were acting according to Jewish law, he replied that they should continue to self-manage their own abortions without interference. **Bans on medication abortion are a direct threat to Jewish religious freedom.**



## HOW DO I TAKE ACTION?

For more information on how to access medication abortion, check out: [Abortion on Our Own Terms](#), [AidAccess](#), [PlanCPills.org](#), and [IneedanA.com](#).

If you have a medication abortion story you'd like to share, tag us using [#JewsforAbortionAccess](#) or visit [ncjw.org/stories](#). **Join us in making abortion more accessible for everyone at [JewsForAbortionAccess.org](#).**