

advertisement

HEALTH &gt; HEALTH NEWS

HEALTH CARE DIET &amp; FITNESS MENTAL HEALTH MEN'S HEALTH WOMEN'S HEALTH

HEALTH MAY 16 2017, 10:08 PM ET

## Women Safely Take Abortion Pills At Home, With Online Consult

by ASSOCIATED PRESS

SHARE



Medical abortions done at home with online help and pills sent in the mail appear to be just as safe as those done at a clinic, according to a new study.

The research tracked the outcomes of 1,000 women in Ireland and Northern Ireland, who used a website run by a group called Women on Web to get abortion pills.



A drone ferrying abortion pills. Women On Waves

The Netherlands-based nonprofit provides advice and pills to women seeking an early abortion in more than 140 countries where access to abortion is restricted. Ireland and Northern Ireland have some of the world's strictest laws, often only granting approval when a woman's life is at risk.

To use the service, women complete an online form, which is reviewed by a doctor. They are sent two drugs in the mail — mifepristone and misoprostol — and given instructions on how to take the pills, which have been used since 1988 to induce early abortions. They are later asked to fill out an evaluation form.

### Related: Drone Delivers Abortion Pills in Northern Ireland

About 95 percent of the women in the study reported successfully ending their pregnancy; nearly all were less than nine weeks pregnant at the time of the online consultation. The researchers said less than 10 percent reported symptoms of a potentially serious complication like very heavy bleeding, fever or persistent pain, comparable to the rates for women who seek medical abortions at clinics where abortion is legal.

Seven women needed a blood transfusion and 26 received antibiotics. No deaths were reported. Follow-up information was missing for about one-third of the 1,636 women who were sent pills over three years, so some complications may have been missed.

### Related: Supreme Court Strikes Down Strict Texas Abortion Law

The study was published online Tuesday in the British journal, The BMJ. Women on Web provided the data and the patient feedback for the study; two of the authors are affiliated with the group. In the past decade, the group has

helped about 50,000 women have a medical abortion at home.

"We now have evidence that self-sourced medical abortion that's entirely outside the formal health care system can be safe and effective," said Dr. Abigail Aiken, an assistant professor at the University of Texas at Austin who led the study.

#### **Related: How Does the Abortion Pill Work?**

"Women are very capable of managing their own abortions and they're able to determine themselves when they need to seek medical attention."

Other experts agreed the study shows how women might be able to safely sidestep restrictive abortion laws.

"This undermines the efficacy of these laws and leaves them unenforceable," said Bernard Dickens, a professor emeritus of health law and policy at the University of Toronto, who co-wrote an accompanying commentary. He cited a number of legal loopholes that would make it difficult to prosecute people helping women have an abortion at home.

**“Women are very capable of managing their own abortions and they’re able to determine themselves when they need to seek medical attention.”**

Aiken said the website does not operate in the U.S. but that a telemedicine study of the abortion pill is underway.

Linda Kavanath, a spokeswoman for the Abortion Rights Campaign in Ireland, said women should be reassured about the safety of doing a medical abortion on their own, adding that the threat of a 14-year jail sentence in Ireland has had a chilling effect.

"These services will exist until the legislation is changed to grant women access to abortion," she said. "Women will always find a way to have abortions and we're just fortunate that these safe methods now exist."

---

**TOPICS** HEALTH NEWS, POLITICS NEWS, SEXUAL HEALTH, U.S. NEWS, WOMEN'S HEALTH

---

**FIRST PUBLISHED** MAY 16 2017, 10:08 PM ET

---

↓ **NEXT STORY** [New Technology May Help Ease Sleep Apnea](#)

#### **More to Explore**

Sponsored Links by Taboola

##### **5 reasons why you should start learning Dutch**

Babbel

##### **People Can Now Track Their Car in Noord-holland**

TrackR Bravo

##### **The Ultimate Way to Get Cheap Hotel Rooms**

Save70

#### **SPONSORED CONTENT**

#### **MORE FROM NBC NEWS**

'New. But Not Born Yesterday'.  
Strapline of DXC Is Identity a... [BVEX](#)

Flight Prices You're Not Allowed to See [Save70.com](#)

If you own a computer you must try this game! [Throne: Free Online Game](#)

His Neighbors Were Outraged at First. Now They Think ... [Fitavation.com](#)

1 million people have fallen in love with this language learning app [Babbel](#)

Engaged Boston Doctors Brutally Murdered In Penthouse Apt.

Chaffetz: WH Not Providing Flynn Documents Because They Don't ...

Penn State hazing death: Timothy Piazza's father says frat members ...

McConnell Asked Why Senate Health Care Group Lacks Women

Mom, Daughter Charged With Incest After Marrying

Promoted Links by Taboola

HEALTH MAY 17 2017, 12:25 AM ET

## New Technology May Help Ease Sleep Apnea

by PARMINDER DEO and JACQUELINE PAULIS, M.D.



Woman yawning at work. Shutterstock

SHARE

The last five years have been exhausting for Andrea Turner. Lights out for the 69-year-old meant sleeping for a couple of hours before being jolted awake in the middle of the night and lying there electrified.

"I was exhausted all the time, from the time I woke to the time I went to bed," says Turner. "It was like how can I make it through this day because I am so tired? I thought since I'm older so that's what it is."

It wasn't until a mother-daughter vacation that Turner's daughter noticed something interesting when her mother slept. Turner would make little gasping sounds throughout the night. This discovery, and the unrelenting exhaustion,

led Turner to Stanford University where she underwent a sleep study. The doctors measured everything from brainwaves to breathing — what they found surprised Turner.

"It was 41 times per hour that I would stop breathing," says Turner. "And then the doctors looked piece by piece, and realized that what I have is sleep apnea."

Turner's nightly interrupted breathing increased her chances of heart attack or stroke by three to four times, according to Dr. Robson Capasso, associate professor of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery at Stanford University.

Roughly 18 million Americans suffer from sleep apnea and as many as 90 percent are undiagnosed, because gasps and choking sounds aren't always so severe they wake someone up. The condition more commonly affects men, as well as people who are overweight, over 40, and have large necks. Women with sleep apnea may suffer poorer heart health than men, according to a recent study.

Obstructive sleep apnea occurs when the soft tissues of the mouth and airway, especially the tongue, block air flow into the lungs. This causes breathing to stop multiple times throughout the night, and oxygen levels in the body to fall — which was happening to Turner. The drop in oxygen while sleeping is a significant risk factor for cardiovascular disease, say experts.

After being diagnosed, Turner tried an external continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine, which proved too cumbersome for her continued use. What's more, a recent study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that the bulky CPAP machines — standard treatment for many patients with sleep apnea — doesn't help prevent heart attacks or stroke, although it does help patients sleep better and improve mood.

#### **Related: Sleep apnea linked to earlier memory loss**

Instead, Turner underwent a relatively new procedure: implanting a pacemaker-like device called Inspire for obstructive sleep apnea. Approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2014, the device is a remote-controlled chest implant plus two thin wires that runs under the skin monitoring a patient's breath, delivering a mild electric current at night.

A clinical trial of Inspire therapy found a 78 percent reduction in the number of sleep apnea events per hour for patients.

"This is definitely an interesting solution for a good number of people," said Capasso.

Inspire is an invasive procedure, so it is not recommended as a first-line treatment and not everyone is a candidate.

The price tag for the Inspire device is \$20,000, with surgery costing extra. Insurance companies are reviewing requests on a case-by-case basis.

Ideal candidates for Inspire:

- should be over the age of 22
- have a diagnosis of moderate to severe obstructive sleep apnea
- be unable to use or get consistent benefit from CPAP
- not be significantly overweight

The main side effect from the device is that people can wake up with a sore tongue, but for Turner that's a small price to pay for a goodnight's sleep.

"Before, I'd be awake constantly, but when I sleep now, I am asleep. I'm not waking up."

Signs of sleep apnea, according to the National, Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, include:

- Morning headaches
- Feeling irritable or depressed; mood swings
- Waking up frequently to urinate
- Memory or learning problems; difficulty concentrating
- Dry mouth or sore throat when you wake up



PARMINDER DEO  

---

JACQUELINE PAULIS, M.D.

---

**TOPIC** HEALTH NEWS

---

**FIRST PUBLISHED** MAY 17 2017, 12:25 AM ET

---

**↓ NEXT STORY** Most U.S. Troops Kicked Out for Misconduct Had Mental Illness: Study

---