

# "WHY I REGRET HAVING AN ABORTION"

In 2001, Emma Oakden exercised her right to an abortion. It's something she agrees we're entitled to. But it's also a decision she regrets

**"It was Monday September 24, 2001, two days after my 18th birthday, when I found out I was pregnant. I immediately decided I wanted to keep the baby. James\* and I had broken up three weeks earlier and when I told him, he was shocked, but said he was 'keen to give it a go'. My parents said an abortion was the only option, that my life would be over if I had a baby. But with James behind me, I was excited at the prospect of becoming a mum. On the Wednesday, though, James agreed that I should have an abortion – he wasn't ready to be a father. I felt so alone and confused, so I agreed to have one. I didn't want to, but I wanted to keep everyone happy. My parents were over the moon about my decision, so after an initial consultation at the abortion clinic, I made an appointment for the procedure.**

## »» THE ABORTION

On November 2nd, James had to work, so I asked my two best friends, Amy\* and Louise\*, to go with me to the clinic. We arrived at 8am and I was taken into a room. Although Amy and Louise were there, I felt scared and alone; more alone than ever before. The next couple of hours passed quickly. I was given forms to sign, drugs to take, a gown to wear, more

drugs, another form to fill in, and a drip was inserted.

Then I was taken into the procedure room. I remember the room being big and white, with silver instruments sticking out at me. I can only vaguely remember the feeling of things happening down below and the noise of the suction pump. I didn't feel much, thanks to the anaesthetic, but I was still conscious of what was happening.

I don't remember going back to my room, but I do recall the nurse coming in to tell me, "Well, you're not pregnant any more." Those words hit a nerve and I started to cry uncontrollably. Amy and Louise returned and the conversation was rather awkward. I was sleepy from the drugs; I was numb.

I was allowed to go home at midday. Those four hours changed my life. I walked through the doors with my baby; I left without him. The next few weeks I was my usual happy self. I had the odd pang of sadness, but I was told I'd probably feel sad for a few days, so I presumed I'd be back to normal soon.



EMMA SHARES HER STORY IN THE HOPE OF HELPING OTHER WOMEN SUFFERING POST ABORTION SYNDROME.

## »» THE PAINFUL AFTERMATH

At the beginning of 2002, it hit me – I'd had an abortion. And I did it just to keep other people happy. I would never know, hold or see my baby grow up. I felt intense regret for having the abortion and for not paying attention to what I really wanted. I was angry at myself for not standing up for my baby and at James for telling me to abort and giving me no support afterwards – and for being able ►