

Stemming the Tide of Chemical Abortions Contaminating Our Water

The vital need to address the move to misoprostol-only chemical abortions and the environmental impacts caused by human fetal remains entering our water supply



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The Imminent Shift to Misoprostol Only (& Other Alternatives for) Chemical Abortions

Most chemical abortions in the U.S. currently occur via the FDA-approved two-drug protocol, mifepristone and misoprostol.¹ Mifepristone is taken first, essentially starving the unborn child.² Misoprostol is taken 24-48 hours later to force a women's body to expel the baby and placenta.³

The first of the two pills, mifepristone, has come under increasing scrutiny over the last several years, in part due to the reality that it and its metabolites remain active in our water after being excreted by women.⁴ Given the risk of harm these active abortion pill components pose to humans and wildlife,⁵ use of this pill should be prohibited, and pro-life organizations around the country are looking to do exactly that.

¹ "Questions and Answers on Mifepristone for Medical Termination of Pregnancy Through Ten Weeks Gestation," U.S. Food and Drug Administration, February 11, 2025, <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/postmarket-drug-safety-information-patients-and-providers/questions-and-answers-mifepristone-medical-termination-pregnancy-through-ten-weeks-gestation>; "The Availability and Use of Medication Abortion," KFF, March 10, 2025, <https://www.kff.org/womens-health-policy/the-availability-and-use-of-medication-abortion/>.

² "Medical Abortion," Mayo Clinic, June 28, 2024, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/testsprocedures/medical-abortion/about/pac-20394687>; "Progesterone," You and Your Hormones, March 2021, <https://www.yourhormones.info/hormones/progesterone/>.

³ Ibid.; see also: Kirstie Piper, "The Abortion Pill: How Does it Work?," Focus on the Family, November 22, 2024, <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/pro-life/abortion/the-abortion-pill-how-does-it-work/>.

⁴ Blake M. Autry and Roopma Wadhwa, "Mifepristone," National Library of Medicine, February 28, 2024, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK557612/>; "Overview of Active Metabolites," Creative Proteomics, accessed April 8, 2025, <https://www.creativeproteomics.com/resource/overview-of-active-metabolites.htm>; "How Pharmaceuticals Enter the Environment," United States Environmental Protection Agency, Last modified February 11, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/household-medication-disposal/how-pharmaceuticals-enter-environment>. See also the EPA's 2019 rule on pharmaceuticals, which acknowledges that "pharmaceuticals are thought to be primarily entering the environment through excretion." Environmental Protection Agency, "Management Standards for Hazardous Waste Pharmaceuticals and Amendment to the P075 Listing for Nicotine | Final rule," Federal Register, Vol. 84, No. 36, February 22, 2019, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-22/pdf/2019-01298.pdf>. For further details, also see Liberty Counsel Action's white paper, "Abortion In Our Water: A Special Report," available at <https://lcaction.org/LCA-PDFs/AbortionInOurWater-.pdf>.

⁵ As it relates to potential for harm, mifepristone acts as an endocrine disruptor—that is, it "disrupts" natural hormonal processes. PFAS, a subset of pollutants that have recently come under extreme scrutiny for their adverse effects on human health, are also potential endocrine disruptors. Evidence today shows that even in low concentrations in the environment, contamination from these endocrine disrupting pollutants, as well as various other pharmaceutical pollutants, can be harmful to human and animal health. See: "Endocrine Disruptors and Your Health," National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, March 2023, https://www.niehs.nih.gov/sites/default/files/health/materials/endocrine_disruptors_508.pdf; Scott Belcher, "PFAS Chemicals: EDCs Contaminating Our Water and Food Supply," Endocrine Society, accessed May 9, 2025, <https://www.endocrine.org/topics/edc/what-edcsare/common-edcs/pfas>; Katarzyna Mokra, "Endocrine Disruptor Potential of Short- and Long-Chain Perfluoroalkyl Substances (PFASs)—A Synthesis of Current Knowledge with Proposal of Molecular Mechanism," International Journal of Molecular Sciences, Vol. 22, No. 4, February 21, 2021, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7926449/>; Water Science School, "Pharmaceuticals in Water," U.S. Geological Survey, June 6, 2018, <https://www.usgs.gov/special-topics/water-science->

In response, pro-abortion advocates are already promoting “misoprostol only” abortions⁶ and researching other alternatives for chemical abortion.⁷ Indeed, to the latter point, the Reproductive Health Access Project notes that “even prior to the onset of legal challenges to mifepristone . . . the search for alternative therapies existed.”⁸ The World Health Organization (WHO) appears to be on the cutting edge of such alternative “therapies,” promoting both misoprostol-only abortions and a new regimen that would replace mifepristone with letrozole (which is typically used to treat infertility and cancer),

[school/science/pharmaceuticals-water#overview](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281101224); Teresa A. Donovan, “Musing Aloud,” Research Gate, August 2015, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281101224>; Michael Phillis, “Why is the EPA regulating PFAS and what are these ‘forever chemicals’?” Associated Press, April 10, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/forever-chemicals-pfas-pollution-epa-drinking-water517ce0049ffbd2931157da4970992f05>.

For further details on the potential harms, see Liberty Counsel Action’s white paper, “Abortion in Our Water: A Special Report,” available at https://lcaction.org/LCA-PDFs/AbortionInOurWater_Final01.pdf.

⁶ “How do I have an abortion using only misoprostol?” Planned Parenthood, 2025, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/abortion/the-abortion-pill/how-do-i-have-an-abortion-using-only-misoprostol>. This webpage specifically states: “. . . having an abortion using only misoprostol — it’s safe, effective, and legal to use in states where abortion is legal. It works 85-95% of the time and can be used up to 11 weeks from the first day of your last period.”

⁷ In addition to misoprostol only abortions, the following chemical abortion methods have been explored: Ulipristal acetate in combination with misoprostol (see: Beverly Winikoff, et. al., “A Proof-of-Concept Study of Ulipristal Acetate for Early Medication Abortion,” *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 4., No. 2, January 23, 2025, <https://evidence.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/EVIDOa2400209>; said study states “Like mifepristone, ulipristal acetate binds to the progesterone receptor with high affinity”, reducing progesterone levels. Ulipristal acetate is also “registered and marketed in more than 74 countries for emergency contraception”); Letrozole in combination with misoprostol (“Abortion Care Guideline,” World Health Organization, 2022, <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/349316/9789240039483-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>); Methotrexate in combination with misoprostol (see: N.L. Moreno-Ruiz, et.al., “Alternatives to mifepristone for early medical abortion,” *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, Vol. 96, No. 3, March 2007, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0020729206004462>; “What You Need to Know About Methotrexate Abortion,” Hope Pregnancy Center, November 5, 2024, <https://hopepregnancy.org/2024/11/05/what-you-need-to-know-about-methotrexate-abortion/>, and CMS Team, “What You Need to Know About Methotrexate Abortion,” Her Choice, November 8, 2024, <https://herchoicemedical.org/2024/11/08/what-you-need-to-know-about-methotrexate-abortion/>, which states, “Methotrexate works by slowing the growth of cells.[1] In a Methotrexate abortion, the drug is administered to stop the pregnancy cells from growing. Misoprostol is taken afterward to expel the fetus from the uterus”); Tamoxifen combined with misoprostol (see Helen C. Pymar and Mitchell D. Creinin, “Medical abortion alternatives to mifepristone,” *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, Vol. 183 No. 2, 2000, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/10846321/>); and, though less common, oxytocin with laminaria (see: Azin Alav et. al., “Misoprostol versus High Dose Oxytocin and Laminaria in Termination of Pregnancy in Second Trimester Pregnancies,” *Electronic Physician*, Vol. 5 No. 4, November 2013, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4477781/>, which states, “studies have shown that the combination of misoprostol and oxytocin is more effective in comparison to misoprostol alone in pregnancy termination.”). See also: “Abortion Pills and Medications,” Drugs.com, accessed September 2, 2025, <https://www.drugs.com/condition/abortion.html>. Undoubtedly, research for other methods will continue.

⁸ Kenya Lyons, “Insights: Letrozole and Early Miscarriage Management,” Reproductive Health Access Project, May 29, 2024, <https://www.reproductiveaccess.org/resource/insights-letrozole-and-early-miscarriage-management/>.

claiming it would be effective up to 14 weeks.⁹ They further highlight that letrozole is “more readily accessible than mifepristone in certain parts of the world” and its low cost makes it an attractive “alternative method for medical abortion.”¹⁰ Even more disturbing, the WHO has recommendations on how to manage chemical abortion pain at *any gestation*.¹¹

Likewise, just this past July, *Ms.* magazine reported that, “In light of the FDA’s recent decision to reopen its safety review of mifepristone — a move advocates warn may lead to new restrictions — **abortion providers say they are ready to offer the misoprostol-only regimen to keep telehealth abortion available in all 50 states.**”¹²

Demonstrating that this shift has in fact begun, the article further notes that Carafem, an abortion provider boasting “a robust virtual care network,” has offered misoprostol-only abortions since 2021, initially to skirt the Supreme Court’s determination “that

⁹ “Abortion Care Guideline,” World Health Organization, 2022, <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/349316/9789240039483-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>. Also of note: A 2023 study entitled “Safety and effectiveness of self-managed abortion using misoprostol alone acquired from an online telemedicine service in the United States” states: “As mifepristone continues to be over-regulated and the 2022 US Supreme Court ruling allows states to severely restrict access to in-clinic abortion care, this regimen is a promising option for self-managed abortion in the US,” see: Dana M. Johnson, et. al., “Safety and effectiveness of self-managed abortion using misoprostol alone acquired from an online telemedicine service in the United States,” *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, Vol. 55, No. 1, February 6, 2023, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1363/psrh.12219>.

¹⁰ Ibid. Specifically the guidelines iterate a new recommendation for abortions under 12 weeks: “(NEW) Suggest the use of a combination regimen of letrozole plus misoprostol (letrozole 10 mg orally each day for 3 days followed by misoprostol 800 µg sublingually on the fourth day) as a safe and effective option” with the caveat, “Further evidence is needed to determine the safety, effectiveness and acceptability of the letrozole plus misoprostol combination regimen at later gestational ages, especially in comparison with that of the mifepristone plus misoprostol combination regimen (the available evidence focused on comparison with the use of misoprostol alone).”

¹¹ Ibid. See also: “Medical management of abortion,” World Health Organization and Human Reproduction Programme, accessed September 2, 2025, https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/reproductive-health/abortion/summary-chart-medical-management-abortion.pdf?sfvrsn=c735d28a_3.

¹² Carrie N. Baker, “If Trump Restricts Mifepristone, Clinicians Are Ready to Pivot to Misoprostol-Only Abortions,” *Ms.*, July 7, 2025, <https://msmagazine.com/2025/07/07/trump-restricts-mifepristone-misoprostol-only-abortion/>. Similarly, NPR reported in 2023 that if mifepristone is restricted, “doctors say they will continue to offer medication abortions without mifepristone, using only the other drug, misoprostol.” See: Mara Gordon, “Medication abortion is still possible with just one drug. Here's how it works,” NPR, April 10, 2023, <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2023/04/10/1168857095/misoprostol-only-medical-abortion>. Note: Though the FDA has only approved the two-pill abortion protocol, prescribers are currently permitted to prescribe misoprostol only for abortion; see: “Understanding Unapproved Use of Approved Drugs ‘Off Label,’” U.S. Food and Drug Administration, February 5, 2018, <https://www.fda.gov/patients/learn-about-expanded-access-and-other-treatment-options/understanding-unapproved-use-approved-drugs-label>.

mifepristone be dispensed in person.”¹³ To this day, Carafem provides misoprostol-only abortion at a cheaper rate than the two-pill protocol.

And Carafem is not the only group that is promoting the cost-effectiveness of misoprostol-only abortions. A qualitative study published July 2025 emphasized that misoprostol-only regimens are common in the rest of the world in part “because misoprostol is relatively low cost.”¹⁴ The study further points out that, given its multiple indications for use, “*misoprostol is often available in pharmacies, clinics and community distribution settings throughout the world,*” making it, in the eyes of abortion proponents, “*a valuable medication, **especially in settings where mifepristone is not available and/or where abortion is illegal or restricted.***”¹⁵

As if seeking to settle the matter, the study concludes that there is a “growing evidence base on . . . the acceptability of the misoprostol-only medication abortion regimen.”¹⁶

The Pro-Life Response

The ideal solution is to simply ban all forms of abortion, including chemical abortion. Indeed, all lives are precious from the moment they are conceived, and pro-life advocates need to continue pushing the message that babies in the womb deserve life. However, the current political climate makes such an outcome untenable.

The next best option is for Congress to ensure aborted fetal remains generated by abortion pills are disposed of in a dignified manner via burial or cremation, ensuring we acknowledge the humanity of all pre-born lives, as opposed to the current system that simply disposes of these precious lives in toilets, treating them as “waste” from the “byproducts of conception.”¹⁷ The “third best” option is, as detailed below, for the FDA to require a new, legally compliant environmental assessment of mifepristone and misoprostol, seeking to ensure aborted fetal remains are at the very least disposed of in a sanitary manner according to various state regulations on medical waste. Both the latter options would require that women collect the remains of their aborted child and

¹³ Ibid. See also: Alice Mark, Angel M. Foster, Jamila Perritt, “The future of abortion is now: Mifepristone by mail and in-clinic abortion access in the United States,” *Contraception*, Vol. 104, No. 1, April 17, 2021, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9748603/>.

¹⁴ Dana M. Johnsona, Sruthi Ramaswamy, Rebecca Gomperts, “Acceptability of misoprostol-only medication abortion dispensed by mail-order or retail pharmacy: a qualitative study based on in-depth interviews in the United States,” *Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters*, Vol. 33, No. 1, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/26410397.2025.2522567>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Note: There is a bill in Congress that seeks to do this, though it does not explicitly apply to chemical abortions performed at home. Liberty Counsel Action proposes an amendment be added that would ensure the bill’s requirements are applied to chemical abortions performed outside of a clinical setting. See: “H.R.798—Dignity for Aborted Children Act,” Congress.gov, January 28, 2025, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/798/text>.

either provide proper disposal themselves or return the remains to an abortion clinic for the same.

Failure by the FDA or Congress to ensure one or the other will, by default, allow abortion providers to continue their evasion of state and federal laws governing the safety and cleanliness of our water supply. To fully understand why this is the case, a basic overview of U.S. waster systems proves necessary.

Overview of U.S. Water Systems “from Toilet to Tap”: How Source Waters Become Drinking Water

U.S. water systems are complex and varied across the nation, though all have the same environmental and public health goals: Ensuring pollution-free lakes, streams and rivers, and pure, safe, uncontaminated water for human consumption. Indeed, as outlined by President Trump, “We want crystal-clean water.”¹⁸

Unfortunately, chemical abortions daily threaten and impede these goals.

Wastewater Treatment Plants & Public Sewer Systems

As the EPA summarizes, “Wastewater treatment is needed so that we can use our rivers and streams for fishing, swimming and drinking water.”¹⁹ Generally speaking, wastewater is treated either via wastewater treatment plants or septic systems, the latter of which will be addressed below.

To the former: There are over 16,000 wastewater treatment plants (WWTP) in the U.S.,²⁰ which service the vast majority of America’s wastewater treatment needs. In areas with WWTP, municipal (city or town) wastewater is first collected by sewers “from homes, businesses, and industries” and carried to wastewater treatment facilities “for treatment before it is discharged to water bodies or land, or reused.”²¹

¹⁸ “Remarks by President Trump on America’s Environmental Leadership,” The White House, July 8, 2019, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-americanenvironmental-leadership/>.

¹⁹ “Primer for Municipal Wastewater Treatment Systems,” United States Environmental Protection Agency, September 2004, <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-09/documents/primer.pdf>.

²⁰ “Water and Wastewater Systems,” Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, accessed September 2, 2025, <https://www.cisa.gov/topics/critical-infrastructure-security-and-resilience/critical-infrastructure-sectors/water-and-wastewater-sector>. Specifically, CISA states, “there are approximately 152,000 public drinking water systems” in the U.S., “including 50,000 community water systems, and more than 16,000 wastewater treatment systems. Over 80 percent of the U.S. population receives their potable water from these drinking water systems, and about 75 percent have their sanitary sewerage treated by these wastewater systems.”

²¹ “Primer for Municipal Wastewater Treatment Systems,” United States Environmental Protection Agency ...

In other words, WWTP treat sewer water — whether it comes from your house, business or at times, storm drains — and then either:

- Send it back into the environment by discharging it into surface waters (lakes, rivers, oceans) or groundwater (infiltrating or injecting it “into aquifers”).²²
- Reuse it for industrial or agricultural purposes, or maintenance of urban recreational areas.²³
- Send it to an advanced treatment plant so it can be re-used as drinking water.²⁴

Types of Wastewater Treatment Plants

There are numerous types of wastewater treatment plants. The most common is the conventional treatment plant, which utilizes three levels of treatment and can be effective for treating both municipal and industrial wastewater.²⁵ Other types of wastewater treatments include (but are not limited to) the following more advanced process, which “address more complex and stringent water quality requirements”²⁶: Membrane Bioreactors (MBR), Advanced Oxidation Processes (AOPs), and Dissolved Air Flotation (DAF) Systems. These systems typically are more expensive in both initial capital and long-term operation.²⁷

²² “Where Does Waste Water Go After Treatment,” Water and Wastewater.com, 2024, <https://www.waterandwastewater.com/where-does-waste-water-go-after-treatment/>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ “Understanding Sewer Systems,” MetroConnects, January 9, 2024, <https://metroconnects.org/understanding-sewer-systems/>.

²⁵ Amir Ghobadi, “Types of Wastewater Treatment Plants,” Seven Seas Water Group, August 6, 2024, <https://seenseaswater.com/types-of-wastewater-treatment-plants/>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ For example, see: Amir Ghobadi, “What Are the Advantages and Disadvantages of MBR?” Seven Seas Water Group, February 12, 2024, <https://seenseaswater.com/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-mbr/>; Amir Ghobadi, “MBR vs. Conventional Wastewater Treatment,” AUC Group, Seven Seas Water Company, September 23, 2024, <https://aucgroup.net/mbr-vs-conventional-wastewater-treatment/>; H2O Team, “The Rise of Advanced Oxidation Process for Wastewater Treatment,” H2O Global News, July 6, 2025, <https://h2oglobalnews.com/advanced-oxidation-process-for-wastewater-treatment/>; Félicien Mazille and Dorothee Spuhler, “Advanced Oxidation Processes,” SSWM University Course, accessed September 2, 2025, <https://sswm.info/pt-pt/sswm-university-course/module-6-disaster-situations-planning-and-preparedness/further-resources-0/advanced-oxidation-processes>; N.R.H. Rao et. al., “Techno-economic comparison of flocculation combined with dissolved air flotation versus sedimentation for microalgae harvesting,” *Algal Research*, Vol. 81, June 12, 2024, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211926424001930>; Saleha Kuzniewski, “What is dissolved air flotation (DAF)?” Wastewater Digest, April 24, 2024, <https://www.wwdmag.com/what-is-articles/article/55020321/what-is-dissolved-air-flotation-daf>; “Dissolved Air Flotation DAF: An Overview of the Technology for Water and Wastewater Treatment,” Yasa ET, April 16, 2024, <https://www.yasa.ltd/post/dissolved-air-flotation-daf-an-overview-of-the-technology-for-water-and-wastewater-treatment>. Also, for example, consider that dissolved air flotation (DAF) is a “treatment solution for different stages of the wastewater treatment process. Whether used as a primary or secondary treatment process for discharge compliance or as a pretreatment stage ahead of membrane filtration, DAF offers unparalleled flexibility and performance.” It would not entirely replace a municipal or drinking treatment system but could be part of one; see: Seven Seas News Team,

Types of Sewer Systems

To get to a wastewater treatment plant, wastewater needs to be transported there first. This is done via our sewer systems, of which there are three main types:

- 1. Sanitary Sewer Systems:** These systems mainly collect and transport domestic, commercial, and industrial wastewater to treatment facilities for appropriate treatment.²⁸ They were specifically “designed and built to carry wastewater from domestic, industrial and commercial sources, but not to carry storm water” (though stormwater can enter them).²⁹
- 2. Storm Sewer System:** These systems use separate pipes to carry stormwater (rain that falls into streets) and “connect directly to local waterways”³⁰ via a channel leading to a local water body.³¹ While some of them are connected to wastewater treatment plants, this is less common.³²
- 3. Combined Sewer Systems:** As the name implies, these systems are a combination of the other two, collecting rainwater and wastewater from homes and businesses in one pipe, typically transporting all wastewater to a WWTP.³³ As outlined by the EPA, “Early sanitarians thought that these combined systems provided adequate health protection. We now know that the overflows designed to release excess flow during rains also release pathogens and other pollutants.”³⁴ More on this below.

“Advantages of DAF Over Traditional Clarification,” Seven Seas Water Group, April 8, 2024, see: <https://sevenseaswater.com/advantages-of-daf-over-clarification/>.

²⁸ “Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs),” The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, updated April 22, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/sanitary-sewer-overflows-ssos>.

²⁹ “Primer for Municipal Wastewater Treatment Systems,” United States Environmental Protection Agency ...

³⁰ “Sewer System,” City of New York, accessed September 2, 2025, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dep/water/sewer-system.page>.

³¹ “Understanding the Three Types of Wastewater – Domestic, Industrial, and Stormwater,” Lakeside Equipment Corporation, August 20, 2022, <https://www.lakeside-equipment.com/understanding-the-three-types-of-wastewater-domestic-industrial-and-stormwater/>. NB: “As stormwater runoff is not always treated, things that the stormwater picks up along the way end up in a freshwater source nearby. It might be automotive fluids that puddled up from a leak in a car’s engine. Salt that’s spread on the roads in the winter, liquid manure, and animal waste are all things that can end up in stormwater.”

³² Ibid.

³³ “Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs),” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, updated May 28, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/combined-sewer-overflows-csos>; see also Understanding Sewer Systems,” MetroConnects ...

³⁴ “Primer for Municipal Wastewater Treatment Systems,” United States Environmental Protection Agency ...

Figure 1: Overview of U.S. Water Systems

Sewer Systems	There are 3 main types of sewer systems: 1. Sanitary Sewer Systems: Transport wastewater to wastewater treatment plants. 2. Storm Sewer Systems: Transport storm water to local waterways (or, less often, to wastewater treatment plants). 3. Combined Sewer Systems: Transport waste and storm water to wastewater treatment plants.
Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTP) / Septic System	• When wastewater reaches a WWTP, the water is treated to remove various contaminants and then released back into the environment. • Most WWTP are conventional* with three levels of treatment - which fail to fully remove all active abortion pill components (metabolites) and organic fetal matter. • About 20% of U.S. homes locally treat wastewater via septic systems.
Drinking Water Treatment Plants (DWTP)	• A DWTP can get water from various sources, including those that may contain raw sewage from sewer system overflows. • Like conventional WWTP, traditional DWTP fail to remove all contaminants, including abortion pill contaminants.
Public Water Systems	• Public Water Systems carry water from drinking water treatment plants to customers. • 90% of Americans obtain drinking water from Public Water Systems (PWS). • The other 10% use private well water, which may be regulated by states.

How Raw Sewage Enters Our Water Sources: Overflows and More

In 2014 it was estimated that over 1.2 trillion gallons “of untreated sewage, stormwater, and industrial waste flow into United States rivers” annually due to “overburdened treatment systems.”³⁵ These overburdened systems include both sanitary and combined sewer systems, which overflow when the amount of water in the system exceeds the capacity of the system to carry the water. In these cases, per the above, excess raw wastewater, or sewage, flows into nearby lakes, streams, and rivers including drinking water sources,³⁶ polluting our water and leading to major public health concerns.

The two types of sewer overflows are as follows:

- 1. Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs):** A combined sewer specifically has outfalls that “discharge untreated or partially treated stormwater and wastewater into

³⁵ Stephanie L. Wear, et. al., Sewage pollution, declining ecosystem health, and cross-sector collaboration,” *Biological Conservation*, Vol. 255, February 23, 2021, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320721000628#bbb0015>.

³⁶ “Combined sewer systems lead to risk of illness after heavy rains,” UIC Today, April 9, 2015, <https://today.uic.edu/combined-sewer-systems-lead-to-risk-of-illness-after-heavy-rains/>; and Adebayo Olatunbosun Sojobi and Tarek Zayed, “Impact of sewer overflow on public health: A comprehensive scientometric analysis and systematic review,” *Environmental Research*, Vol. 203, June 30, 2021, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0013935121009038>, which states “Sewer overflow negatively influences drinking water, surface waters and recreational beaches, groundwater, and irrigated foods as shown in Table 8,” which includes public health impacts in the U.S.

nearby waterbodies [when the system is overwhelmed during wet weather].”³⁷ Notably, the Clean Water Act mandates that areas utilizing CSOs “put controls in place to address these concerns.”³⁸ However, these controls are failing to curb the problem entirely: While the EPA recently estimated that the following figure may have been reduced by 50%, in 2004, the **EPA estimated “850 billion gallons of contaminated CSO discharges were released each year.”**³⁹ Even if that has been halved, there are still hundreds of billions of gallons of contaminated raw sewage entering into lakes, streams, and rivers every year.

- 2. Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs):** Like CSOs, a sanitary sewer system can also overflow and lead to “serious water quality problems, and back-up into homes, causing property damage and threatening public health.”⁴⁰ In 2025, the EPA estimated that between 23,000 - 75,000 sanitary system overflows occur annually, “not including sewage backups into buildings.”⁴¹

In addition to sewer overflows, the EPA notes urban streams may be contaminated with wastewater from⁴²:

- “Accidental or unpermitted discharges.”
- “Leakage from broken, blocked or aging infrastructure.”
- “Leachate⁴³ from septic tanks” (*see below for more on septic tanks*).
- “Permitted municipal sewage discharges ‘treated to varying degrees.’”

Public Health Concerns

Combined sewer system overflows are “**a major water pollution and public health concern,**” as they “**can contain bacteria, debris, and other hazardous substances that can be harmful to people, pets, and wildlife,**” leading to “beach closures, shellfish bed closures, algae growth, reduced oxygen levels in waterways, and aesthetic

³⁷ “Combined Sewer Overflow Basics,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, update August 28, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/combined-sewer-overflow-basics>.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ “Clean Water Act: EPA Should Track Control of Combined Sewer Overflows and Water Quality Improvements,” U.S. Government Accountability Office, January 25, 2023, <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-23-105285>; “Combined Sewer Overflow Program Progress,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, update August 28, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/combined-sewer-overflow-program-progress>.

⁴⁰ “Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs),” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, April 22, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/sanitary-sewer-overflows-ssos>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² “Urbanization - Wastewater Inputs,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, February 7, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/caddis/urbanization-wastewater-inputs>.

⁴³ “What is leachate? How is it controlled?” FAQs, SPSA Waste Solutions, accessed September 2, 2025, <https://www.spsava.gov/FAQ.aspx?QID=78>; “Leachate is the liquid that drains from a landfill or through waste materials and has extracted some component of the material through which it has passed.”

impacts from floating debris or oil slicks.”⁴⁴ Indeed, as raw, untreated sewage can contain all kinds of bodily fluids, including feces, urine, vomit, menstrual blood, and any other contaminants individuals decide to flush down the toilet, “a wide variety of waterborne, foodborne, bloodborne, respiratory and sexually-transmitted diseases may be ... detected in sewage.”⁴⁵ Indeed, the risk of infection is very present for anyone who comes into contact with such sewage.⁴⁶

How is This Relevant to Chemical Abortion?

First, traditional wastewater treatment plants fail to remove all active abortion pill contaminants (metabolites). They also fail to remove all biological remains of aborted babies.⁴⁷ Second, in addition to pathogens, sewer water is likely to contain aborted human remains. All of this waste may therefore be entering lakes, streams, and rivers where people recreate. Such knowledge is disturbing and will more than likely affect the way people interact with their environment (as it should).

All of this should have been considered when the FDA approved the chemical abortion drug regimen.

None of it was.

The Other Wastewater Treatment Process: Septic Systems

About 20 percent of U.S. homes treat their wastewater with septic systems,⁴⁸ which carry the wastewater from a home (sometimes multiple homes, businesses, or apartment complexes) into an underground, water-tight container called a septic tank. In conventional systems the wastewater is held in the septic tank until solids settle at the bottom, creating sludge, and anaerobic bacteria “feed on organic wastewater pollutants.”⁴⁹ Liquids exit into a drainfield, and the water is “processed” in the soil.⁵⁰ It

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Dr Sarah Coxon and Dr Carla Eaton, “Review of contaminants of potential human health concern in wastewater and stormwater,” Prepared for the New Zealand Ministry of Health, May 2023, <https://www.phfscience.nz/media/lmljcmuf/esr-environmental-health-report-wastewater-stormwater.pdf>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ For a detailed analysis of this, see Liberty Counsel Action’s Special Report on Abortion In Our Water, available at <https://lcaction.org/LCA-PDFs/AbortionInOurWater-.pdf>.

⁴⁸ “Sources and Solutions: Wastewater,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, November 18, 2024, <https://www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution/sources-and-solutions-wastewater>.

⁴⁹ “What is a septic system and how does it work?” Premier Tech Ltd., accessed September 2, 2025, <https://www.premiertechaqua.com/en-us/blog/what-is-septic-system>; see also “How a Septic System Works,” Septic Smart for Lake Erie, accessed September 2, 2025, <https://www4.erie.gov/septicmart/how-septic-system-works>.

⁵⁰ More specifically, “Pretreated wastewater is discharged through piping onto porous surfaces that allow wastewater to filter through the soil. The soil accepts, treats, and disperses wastewater as it percolates through the soil, ultimately discharging to groundwater. If the drainfield is overloaded with too much liquid, it can flood, causing sewage to flow to the ground surface or create backups in toilets and sinks.”

then enters into groundwater, “which eventually drains into nearby streams, rivers, and lakes.”⁵¹ In advanced and alternative septic systems (of which there are numerous types), a similar process occurs,⁵² with advanced systems having “one or more” other treatments between the septic tank and the final disbursement of filtered wastewater.⁵³

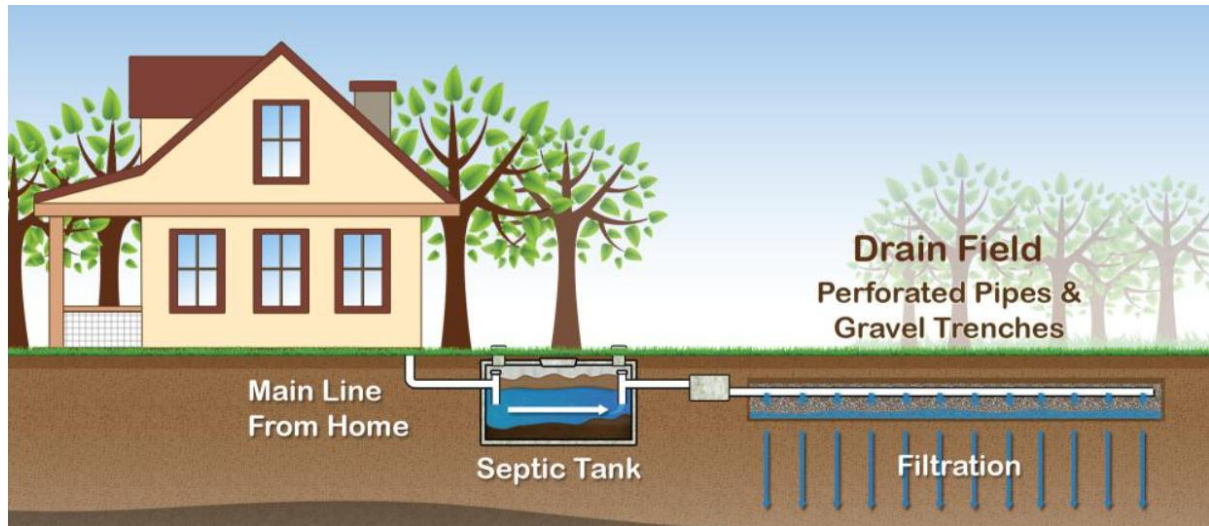


Figure 2: Image from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, "Keep your septic system healthy," August 1, 2022, <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/news-and-stories/keep-your-septic-system-healthy>.

How is This Relevant to Chemical Abortion?

While the EPA hosts a plethora of “Septic Smart” resources that include tips on what *not* to flush down the toilet — ranging from “feminine hygiene products” to “paper towels, and pharmaceuticals”⁵⁴ — if a woman in the home has a chemical abortion, she is more than likely flushing something far more disturbing, as abortion providers often direct women to sit on the toilet during their home abortions.⁵⁵ In such cases, the septic sludge would include aborted human remains, and the water entering the soil would more than likely be contaminated with active metabolites from the abortion pill mifepristone.

By percolating through the soil, “harmful coliform bacteria, viruses and nutrients” are naturally removed. See: “How Septic Systems Work,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, July 1, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/septic/how-septic-systems-work>.

⁵¹ “What is a septic system and how does it work?” Premier Tech Ltd. ...

⁵² “Types of Septic Systems,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, May 20, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/septic/types-septic-systems>. Note: Some alternative systems do not follow the basic process outlined; for example, “Evapotranspiration systems” use watertight material to line the drainfield and, “after the effluent enters the drainfield, it evaporates into the air. Unlike other septic system designs, the effluent never filters to the soil and never reaches groundwater.”

⁵³ “What is a septic system and how does it work?” Premier Tech Ltd. ...

⁵⁴ “Do Your Part, Be SepticSmart: The Do’s and Don’ts of Your Septic System,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, September 2013, https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2017-07/documents/septicmart_week_flyer_082415_508-v2.pdf.

⁵⁵ Kendall @ Planned Parenthood, “What do I need to do before I take abortion pills?” Planned Parenthood, October 4, 2022, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/blog/what-do-i-need-to-do-before-i-take-abortion-pills>.

To the former point on sludge, best practice recommends it be pumped out of a septic system at least every 3 years.⁵⁶ It is then “disposed of” in one of three ways:

1. At a septage receiving station, which is “designed solely to process septic waste”⁵⁷ and may operate in “partnership with a wastewater plant or landfill.”⁵⁸ While treatment methods vary, they typically include biological treatments “and disinfection,” which seek to “transform septage into a [solid] form that is safer for disposal,” or in some cases, for “beneficial reuse.”⁵⁹
2. At wastewater treatment plants, where it is “combined with sewage from municipal sewer systems and treated using various biological, chemical, and physical processes.”⁶⁰ (Though said processes fail to remove all contaminants.⁶¹) The combined septic-sewage sludge is then most often either:⁶²
 - Incinerated,
 - Disposed of in a landfill, or
 - Applied to agricultural or other types of land (to condition soil or fertilize vegetation/crops⁶³).

It may also be stored or injected into deep wells.⁶⁴

3. As a form of agricultural fertilizer (“land application”). Prior to using septic waste in this manner, however, it must undergo treatment “to kill harmful pathogens.”⁶⁵

⁵⁶ “Where Do Septic Trucks Dump? Understanding Septic Waste Disposal,” Upfront Septic and Plumbing, accessed September 2, 2025, <https://www.upfrontseptic.com/2024/09/29/where-do-septic-trucks-dump/>; “How to Care for Your Septic System,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, August 28, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/septic/how-care-your-septic-system>.

⁵⁷ Ibid. See also: Josh Clark and Melanie Radzicki McManus, “How Often Are Septic Tanks Emptied, and Where Do the Contents Go?” How Stuff Works, September 2, 2025, <https://home.howstuffworks.com/home-improvement/plumbing/septic-tank-cleaning.htm>.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ “The Process of Septage Receiving: From Pumping to Treatment in Eastern Washington,” Tenelco Inc., July 3, 2025, <https://tenelco.net/2025/07/the-process-of-septage-receiving-from-pumping-to-treatment/>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “What is Sewage Sludge?” Center for Food Safety, 2025, <https://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/issues/1050/sewage-sludge/what-is-sewage-sludge>.

⁶² “Basic Information about Sewage Sludge and Biosolids,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, March 12, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/biosolids/basic-information-about-sewage-sludge-and-biosolids#practices>; see also “The Sludge Report: What Happens After Treatment?,” Lehigh County Authority, June 19, 2019, <https://www.lehighcountyauthority.org/2019/06/the-sludge-report-what-happens-after-treatment/>.

⁶³ “Land Application of Biosolids,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, January 6, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/biosolids/land-application-biosolids>.

⁶⁴ For further information on this see: “Class I Industrial and Municipal Waste Disposal Wells,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, March 12, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/uic/class-i-industrial-and-municipal-waste-disposal-wells>.

⁶⁵ “Where Do Septic Trucks Dump? Understanding Septic Waste Disposal,” Upfront Septic and Plumbing ... See also: Josh Clark and Melanie Radzicki McManus, “How Often Are Septic Tanks Emptied, and Where Do the Contents Go?” How Stuff Works ...

The implications of the above are deeply distressing when one realizes **sludge containing aborted babies could literally be fertilizing our food**.

Indeed, consider that in 2023, the EPA reported 60% the biosolids — the term given to sewage sludge “treated” per EPA standards — generated by facilities subject to reporting requirements⁶⁶ were used in land application, often as fertilizer.⁶⁷ As the Center for Food Safety articulates, this sewage sludge often still consists of “toxic compounds, nanomaterials, hormones, and dangerous pathogens.” The fact that it is “applied to the very food we eat” means these potentially harmful chemicals, including “PCBs, flame retardants, heavy metals, and **endocrine disruptors**” (*note: mifepristone acts as an endocrine disruptor and its components remain active post-excretion and wastewater treatment*) are accumulating “and are taken up by crops, putting human health at risk.”⁶⁸

The fact that aborted babies — often contaminated with potentially endocrine-disrupting active abortion pill contaminants — are part of this “sewage sludge turned fertilizer” is beyond the pale.

But it doesn’t end there: We could also be drinking water that has chemical substances from elective abortions.

Drinking Water Treatment Plants (DWTPs) & Distribution Systems

Drinking Water Treatment Plants

Drinking water treatment plants obtain water from various water sources: reservoirs, lakes, rivers, groundwater, and, at times, from other treatment plants (e.g., advanced and wastewater treatment plants). The most commonly used processes for treating drinking water are conventional,⁶⁹ which involves the following treatment processes:

⁶⁶ Note: Biosolids Annual Reports (BARs) “are required from POTWs that land apply, incinerate, or dispose of their sewage sludge via surface disposal and: Serve 10,000 people or more; Are Major POTWs (POTWs with a design flow rate greater than or equal to one million gallons per day); Are Class 1 management facilities (POTWs with an approved pretreatment program or facilities that have been classified as such by the EPA or state); or Are otherwise required to report by the EPA or permitting authority.” “Basic Information about Sewage Sludge and Biosolids,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, March 12, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/biosolids/basic-information-about-sewage-sludge-and-biosolids#practices>.

⁶⁷ Ibid., see also: “The Sludge Report: What Happens After Treatment?,” Lehigh County Authority ... and “U.S. Biosolids,” National Biosolids Data Project, accessed September 2, 2025, <https://www.biosolidsdata.org/national-summary>.

⁶⁸ “What is Sewage Sludge?” Center for Food Safety ...

⁶⁹ Charles P. Gerba, “Drinking Water Treatment,” Environmental Microbiology, Second Edition, 2009, accessed at Science Direct, September 2, 2025, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/drinking-water-treatment>. See also: Sarah Lee, “The Ultimate Guide to Drinking Water Treatment,” Number Analytics, June 11, 2025, <https://www.numberanalytics.com/blog/ultimate-guide-drinking-water-treatment> and “Where Does My Drinking Water Come From?” City of Raleigh, February 1, 2023, <https://raleighnc.gov/water-and-sewer/where-does-my-drinking-water-come>.

coagulation, flocculation, clarification (sedimentation), filtration, and disinfection.⁷⁰ More advanced drinking water treatment technologies (though again, less common) are numerous;⁷¹ indeed, the EPA lists 28 different types of treatment processes.⁷²

Furthermore, while all water supply sources can include treated wastewater discharged from wastewater treatment plants, in cases where a DWTP gets water *directly* from another treatment plant, this is known as re-used or recycled water, which can include water from sinks, showers, and yes — toilets.⁷³ Such water typically undergoes additional treatment post-treatment at a WWTP and prior to entering a DWTP and ultimately U.S. taps.⁷⁴

Direct and Indirect Potable Reuse

Adding a further layer of complexity, there are two main systems used for treating recycled or re-used water to make it suitable for human consumption: direct and indirect potable reuse. As explained by a civil and environmental engineering professor, in the indirect system, sewer water goes through a WWTP, an advanced treatment plant⁷⁵

⁷⁰ “How Water Treatment Works,” U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February 6, 2024, https://www.cdc.gov/drinking-water/about/how-water-treatment-works.html#cdc_health_safety_special_topic_resources-resources; see also: “Conventional

Treatment,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, July 1, 2025, <https://tdb.epa.gov/tdb/treatmentprocess?treatmentProcessId=1934681921>.

⁷¹ Sarah Lee, “The Ultimate Guide to Drinking Water Treatment,” ... See also Mashitah Che Razali et. al., “Existing Filtration Treatment on Drinking Water Process and Concerns Issues,” *Membranes*, February 27, 2023, Vol. 13, No. 3, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10051433/>.

⁷² “Find a Treatment Process,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, July 1, 2025, <https://tdb.epa.gov/tdb/findtreatmentprocess>.

⁷³ Zhai Yun Tan, “How Do We Get Our Drinking Water In The U.S.?” NPR, April 4, 2016, <https://www.npr.org/2016/04/14/473806134/how-do-we-get-our-drinking-water-in-the-u-s>; “Drinking Water Sources: An Overview,” U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, January 10, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/drinking-water/about/drinking-water-sources-an-overview.html>. NB: Some people also drink rainwater, though as the CDC notes, “Collecting rainwater is not allowed in all places. Some states consider rainwater the property of the state and regulate its collection.” See: “Collecting Rainwater and Your Health: An Overview,” U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, July 23, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/drinking-water/about/collecting-rainwater-and-your-health-an-overview.html>. Also of note, “Recycled Water generally refers to treated domestic wastewater that is used more than once before it passes back into the water cycle. The terms ‘reused’ and ‘recycled’ are often used interchangeably depending on where you are geographically...Potable Reuse refers to recycled water you can drink. The reclaimed water is purified sufficiently to meet or exceed federal and state drinking water standards and is safe for human consumption.” See: “Glossary,” WaterReuse, accessed September 2, 2025, <https://watereuse.org/educate/water-reuse-101/glossary/>.

⁷⁴ “Recycled Water for Drinking: An Overview,” U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February 16, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/drinking-water/about/recycled-water-for-drinking-an-overview.html>.

⁷⁵ According to the CDC, these advanced water treatment plants “removes additional germs and harmful chemicals.” Ibid. For example, the CDC also states that water treatment plants treating recycled water for drinking often use reverse osmosis; see “How Water Treatment Works,” U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February 6, 2024, https://www.cdc.gov/drinking-water/about/how-water-treatment-works.html#cdc_health_safety_special_topic_resources-resources. NB: While there is evidence to suggest this and other advanced treatment processes are effective in removing *certain*

(which is typically “a three-step process that ensures it meets or even exceeds state and federal standards for drinking water quality”), and then enters an “environmental buffer” (like an aquifer underground) before it finally enters a drinking water system.⁷⁶ The direct potable reuse system cuts out the “environmental buffer” step — sometimes sending water directly to our taps.

Drinking Water Distribution Systems

Most drinking water is distributed by Public Water Systems⁷⁷ (PWS), of which there are over 151,000 in the U.S.⁷⁸ Indeed, 90% of the U.S. population gets water from a public water system (the other 10% rely on private drinking wells which are not regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)).⁷⁹ PWS’s connect drinking water treatment plants and other sources of water to property owners and fall into three categories⁸⁰:

1. “Community Water Systems,” which are public water systems that supply water year-round “to the same population.”
2. “Non-transient Non-community Water Systems,” which are public water systems that supply water regularly “to at least 25 of the same people at least six months per year.”
3. “Transient Non-community Water Systems,” which are public water systems that provide water in places (e.g. “a gas station or campground”) “where people do not remain for long periods of time.”

pharmaceuticals – they don’t remove all. For example one study found reverse osmosis and nano filtration removed over 85% of “almost all of the pharmaceuticals investigated (>85%),” See: J. Radjenović et. al., “Rejection of pharmaceuticals in nanofiltration and reverse osmosis membrane drinking water treatment,” *Water Research*, Vol. 42, No. 14, August 2008, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0043135408002248?via%3Dihub>. Another study found RO removed over 99% of 3 common active pharmaceutically active compounds; see: Asif Matin et. al., “Removal of pharmaceutically active compounds from water sources using nanofiltration and reverse osmosis membranes: Comparison of removal efficiencies and in-depth analysis of rejection mechanisms,” *Journal of Environmental Management*, Vol. 338, July 15, 2023, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S030147972300470X/>.

⁷⁶ Annika Kim Constantino, “What’s in your drinking water? If you live in one of these states, it might soon be recycled sewage,” CNBC, August 19, 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/19/direct-potable-reuse-why-drinking-water-could-include-recycled-sewage.html>.

⁷⁷ “Drinking Water Distribution System Tools and Resources,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, August 20, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/drinking-water-distribution-system-tools-and-resources>. NB: This page states, “Public water systems (PWSs) are responsible for operating and maintaining their distribution systems, which extend from the designated entry point to the distribution system (EPTDS) – typically the source or water treatment plant - up to the service connection, after which the piping is the property owner’s responsibility.”

⁷⁸ “Infographic: How does your water system work?” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, June 13, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/infographic-how-does-your-water-system-work>.

⁷⁹ “Basic Information about Your Drinking Water,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, November 7, 2024, <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-your-drinking-water>.

⁸⁰ “Information about Public Water Systems,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, October 30, 2024, <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/information-about-public-water-systems>.

Alongside provisions in the Clean Water Act seeking to protect water sources, the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), passed in 1974, requires “states and utilities to assess their source water.”⁸¹ The SDWA further requires the EPA to establish “and enforce safety standards” for all PWS’s. Notably, the EPA has delegated PWS’s “primary enforcement responsibility” to states and Indian Tribes.⁸² Also as outlined by the EPA, “protecting source water from contamination helps reduce treatment costs and may avoid or defer the need for complex treatment,” while at the same time “protecting water quality for wildlife and recreational use, and protecting the availability and quantity of water supplies.”

Unfortunately, these laws are failing to adequately protect our source waters. A study by the EPA found that (as of 2009) approximately 46% of surface waters were in “poor” biological condition, which can lead to adverse effects on wildlife, “reduce recreational opportunities, and lead to diminished water quality and flood retention benefits.”⁸³ Similarly disturbing, one water treatment company estimates “48% of wastewater today isn’t treated before it’s returned to a lake, stream, river, pond, ocean, etc.,” noting that “in districts with wastewater treatment plants, all it takes is one piece of broken equipment to create chaos that leads to the release of untreated wastewater.”⁸⁴

While in one sense this is unsurprising when one considers the prevalence of sewer system overflows outlined above, it also deserves immediate attention, particularly when one considers the connection to chemical abortion.

U.S. Water Systems Fail to Prevent Aborted Human Remains from Entering Our Water Sources

**Please note the nature of the following information is disturbing.*

Women are often directed by chemical abortion providers to flush their “pregnancy remains,” which means aborted babies daily enter our raw sewage and are therefore more than likely entering our water supply. While some may argue our wastewater

⁸¹ “Basic Information about Source Water Protection,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, February 3, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/sourcewaterprotection/basic-information-about-source-water-protection>. Of note, “there is no federal mandate requiring comprehensive source water protection.”

⁸² “Basic Information about Your Drinking Water,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, November 7, 2024, <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-your-drinking-water>.

⁸³ “Unraveling the Magic: How Does a Drinking Water Treatment Plant Work?” October 4, 2023, Transcend Software Inc, <https://transcendinfra.com/unraveling-the-magic-how-does-a-drinking-water-treatment-plant-work/>; “National Water Quality Inventory: Report to Congress,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, August 2017, https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2017-12/documents/305brtc_finalowow_08302017.pdf.

⁸⁴ “Understanding the Three Types of Wastewater – Domestic, Industrial, and Stormwater,” Lakeside Equipment Corporation, August 20, 2022, <https://www.lakeside-equipment.com/understanding-the-three-types-of-wastewater-domestic-industrial-and-stormwater/>.

systems are capable of “processing” aborted human fetal remains — and they generally are to the extent that wastewater treatment plants themselves remove the risk of disease and ensure one doesn’t see a finger or other body parts floating in one’s local lake or stream — there are a few issues with this reasoning:

- It ignores the fact that, as the above demonstrates, raw sewage carrying aborted babies does not always make it to a WWTP. **Rather, hundreds of billions of gallons of raw sewage — which could be carrying aborted babies — is annually released into our water sources without treatment.**
- Aborted babies themselves may contribute to sewer clogs and lead to overflows as they are viscous and do not breakdown like human excrement and toilet paper. Indeed, consider that if another industry were to daily discard of rags down the sewer system as a standard practice, which would likewise contribute to sewer system overflows, there would like be a call for regulating that business to prohibit such a practice — just as there should be a call to prohibit the abortion industry’s standard practice that leads to the disposing of babies into the sewer system.
- Furthermore, for aborted human remains that do enter WWTPs, they are not entirely removed from the water. Approximately 10 percent of the organic matter in wastewater — which can include fetal biomass — is not removed nor required to be per the EPA’s standards (consider, for example, microscopic fragments of skin or other organic fetal remains).

As stated above, unless Congress or the FDA takes immediate action, this reality — aborted babies being flushed into our sewer systems — will continue.

But it doesn’t have to.

Addressing the “Off-Label” (Misoprostol-Only) Loophole

Current environmental law makes clear that medical waste — which would include aborted human remains and placentas — should not be disposed of into navigable waters. Likewise, a “State-by-state Regulated Medical Waste Resource Locator” developed via the National Center for Manufacturing Sciences (which received funding from the EPA) outlines that numerous state environmental regulations seeking to ensure such waste is properly handled cover “packaging, storage, and transportation of medical waste.”⁸⁵ This same State-by-state Regulated Medical Waste (RMW) Resource Locator makes clear that while the terminology among states for RMW varies, the terms used usually “refer to the same thing: that portion of the medical waste stream that may be

⁸⁵ Regulated Medical Waste State Resource Locator | Georgia, 2018, <https://www.envcap.org/srl/rmw/ga-rmw.html>.

contaminated by blood, body fluids or other potentially infectious materials, thus posing a significant risk of transmitting infection.”⁸⁶

Yet, as just outlined, the human remains of abortions enter our waters indirectly via wastewater systems on a seemingly regular basis. And while the FDA may argue that it followed the law as it pertains to drug approval both for its 1988 approval of misoprostol and approval of the two-drug abortion pill regimen in 2000, current laws, regulations, and guidelines suggest that the FDA has not only the ability but the responsibility to require both undergo a new environmental assessment.

1. In cases where a federal agency’s activity (e.g. approving a drug) “may result in the discharge or runoff of pollutants,” the Clean Water Act makes clear that “each officer, agent, or employee thereof in the performance of his official duties, shall be subject to, and comply with, all Federal, State, interstate, and local requirements, administrative authority, and process and sanctions respecting the control and abatement of water pollution.”⁸⁷ The Clean Water Act further defines “pollutant” as “dredged spoil, solid waste, incinerator residue, sewage, garbage, sewage sludge, munitions, **chemical wastes, biological materials** . . . discharged into water.”⁸⁸

Mifepristone is a **chemical waste** that is discharged into wastewater systems, and active components of it likely enter our water supply given wastewater treatment plants do not fully remove these types of contaminants. Human fetal remains generated from mifepristone and misoprostol are **biological materials** that may be discharged into the water as a result of chemical abortions. Said remains are also likely to enter the water supply in the event of sewer system overflows⁸⁹ (detailed above).

By failing to even acknowledge that aborted fetal remains would be generated and then most likely disposed of in toilets (water systems) during a chemical abortion, whether from mifepristone and misoprostol or misoprostol alone, the FDA failed

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Office of the Law Revision Counsel, 33 U.S.C. §1251, accessed April 16, 2025, <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title33/chapter26&edition=prelim>. For more detail on the CWA and NEPA, see <https://lcaction.org/LCA-PDFs/AbortionInOurWater-.pdf>.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ NB: The CWA prohibits the disposal of medical waste “into the navigable waters.” While WWTP are not navigable waters, the medical waste disposed of in them may in fact end up in said navigable waters in the event of sewer system overflows. Furthermore, the very act of disposing of a terminated pregnancy into the toilet may lead to an overflow, depending on the gestations of the baby, as babies at later gestations can clog pipes (and have been discovered to do so). See: Office of the Law Revision Counsel, 33 U.S.C. §1311, accessed August 28, 2025, <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title33/chapter26&edition=prelim>.

to ensure that they were abiding by all relevant laws “respecting the control and abatement of water pollution.”

2. The National Environmental Policy Act outlines that any major federal action “**significantly** affecting the **quality of the human environment**,” is to include “a detailed statement by the responsible official on—(i) **reasonably foreseeable** environmental effects of the proposed agency action.”⁹⁰ If the significance of the effect of said action is **unknown**, at the least, “an agency shall prepare an **environmental assessment**,” unless an exclusion applies.⁹¹

The need to dispose of fetal remains and the likelihood they would be disposed of down the toilet is a “**reasonably foreseeable**” effect of approving mifepristone and misoprostol. The impact of said approval on **the human environment** — which, according to the 1995 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is to be interpreted as including “the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment”⁹² — is at the least unknown. It is also significant according to the 1995 CFR, which outlines that “significantly” includes consideration of several factors, among them, “The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial” and “the degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.”⁹³ Indeed, fetal remains being flushed into the sewer system would, in the eyes of many, be highly controversial and create a unique (and again at the least, unknown) risk related to the “quality of the human environment.”

3. While drug manufacturers can obtain an exemption for a new environmental assessment for various reasons, according to a 1998 FDA guidance, those exemptions do not apply in the case of “extraordinary circumstances” indicating “that the specific proposed action may **significantly affect** the quality of the human environment.”⁹⁴ Said circumstances “can be shown **by data available**

⁹⁰ Office of the Law Revision Counsel, 42 U.S.C. §4332, accessed May 8, 2025, <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title42/chapter55&edition=prelim>.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² NB: The code goes on that to state “This means that economic or social effects are not intended by themselves to require preparation of an environmental impact statement. When an environmental impact statement is prepared and economic or social and natural or physical environmental effects are interrelated, then the environmental impact statement will discuss all of these effects on the human environment.” Code of Federal Regulations, Title 40, Chapter 5, §1508.14, 1995.

⁹³ Code of Federal Regulations, Title 40, Chapter 5, §1508.27, 1995. NB: the CFR no longer publicly displays this section of code; <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-40/chapter-V/subchapter-A>.

⁹⁴ “Environmental Assessment of Human Drug and Biologics Applications | Guidance for Industry,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, July 1998, <https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/search-fda-guidance-documents/environmental-assessment-human-drug-and-biologics->

either to the Agency or the applicant and can be based on the production, use, or **disposal from use** of the FDA-regulated article.”⁹⁵

Given that:

- A “**disposal from use**” of the FDA-regulated articles would be necessary (including if misoprostol alone is used for the off-label purpose of abortion), as after the drug(s) is(are) used to end a pregnancy, human remains and medical waste must be disposed of, and
- Failure to do dispose of said remains properly could **significantly affect** (per the above definition of significant) the quality of the human environment,

by definition, the “extraordinary circumstance” of medical waste generation should have been considered in subsequent approvals of the two-drug protocol.

Furthermore, **data available to both the agency and the manufacturer** of misoprostol demonstrates abortion providers may use misoprostol alone for “at-home” abortions. That the two-drug abortion regimen and off-label abortion regimen of misoprostol *still result in medical waste generation* means both drug approvals — and their environmental assessments — merit reconsideration now.

4. We currently face a unique scenario: An FDA approved drug (misoprostol) being used off-label generates medical waste and human remains. Furthermore, a move by abortion providers to misoprostol-only abortions is already occurring and will likely continue, whether or not the manufacturer submits a supplemental new drug application seeking the FDA’s approval for such use.⁹⁶ Such a unique scenario requires a unique approach. Allowing chemical abortions to continue via misoprostol only without requiring proper disposal of “medical waste” is a clear violation of the spirit of the law, if not the letter. Our federal agencies have a duty to uphold the spirit and intent of our laws, hence, the FDA is well within its authority to initiate a new environmental assessment for mifepristone and

[applications](#). This document goes into yet greater detail, reiterating the rule: “The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is required under the NEPA to consider the environmental impacts of approving drug and biologics applications as an integral part of its regulatory process.”

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Note: If a manufacturer seeks to advertise misoprostol alone for use in abortion, then a new drug application would be required. See: Gail A. Van Norman, “Off-Label Use vs Off-Label Marketing: Part 2: Off-Label Marketing—Consequences for Patients, Clinicians, and Researchers,” *JACC: Basic to Translational Science*, Vol. 8, No. 3, March 27, 2023, <https://www.jacc.org/doi/10.1016/j.jacbts.2022.12.012>. This article also articulates the dangers associated with off-label use, stating, “Off-label marketing promotes use associated with significantly heightened rates of adverse effects that have been demonstrated to be substantially increased in off-label use in general.”

misoprostol that takes into account the fact that the FDA’s approval of the drugs — whether for the use intended or not — *may and likely will lead to “the discharge or runoff of pollutants.”*⁹⁷ In the case of mifepristone, we know this to be true as the FDA has approved it for use in chemical abortions performed outside of a clinical setting; in the latter case we know this to be true as abortion providers prescribe misoprostol “off-label” for abortions performed outside a clinical setting.

How to Counter the Move to Alternative Chemical Abortion Methods

As demonstrated, while there are numerous reasons to ban mifepristone — ranging from the harms it poses to women to the ways in which it contaminates our water — were such a ban to be implemented, unless chemical abortion is prohibited altogether or laws are passed to require proper disposal of aborted fetal remains *no matter the drugs or instruments used*, chemical abortions will continue to harm women, pollute our waters, and take innocent lives. The response must be a continued focus on both the harms caused by misoprostol as well as the need to protect our environment by requiring dignified, or at the least sanitary, disposition of aborted babies. Liberty Counsel Action therefore proposes the following:

1. Congress to Hold Hearings and Pass Legislation Requiring Dignified Disposal of Aborted Babies

Congressional hearings on this subject would serve to provide the oversight that the EPA and FDA were lacking when they approved chemical abortion during the Clinton era. They would also create an opportunity for national scrutiny of said oversight and provide a means to solicit expert research and analysis on the extent to which mifepristone, misoprostol, and aborted human remains may be harming our waterways — including by disturbing ones’ relationship with the environment. Hearings will also serve to educate the wider public on the dangers posed by chemical abortion, no matter the means.

Additionally, Liberty Counsel Action proposes a focus of these hearings should be on the proper disposal of human fetal remains. While ideally, we would not be murdering babies to begin with, we certainly should not be putting them in the toilet. Requiring proper, dignified disposal of all abortions, whether at home or in clinic — ideally through cremation or burial — would force a woman to consider the humanity of her child. Indeed, the abortion industry is adamantly opposed to requiring dignified disposal, in part because burials and cremation costs more money,⁹⁸ and in part, as the Attorney General

⁹⁷ Office of the Law Revision Counsel, 33 U.S.C. §1251, accessed April 16, 2025, <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title33/chapter26&edition=prelim>.

⁹⁸ ABC News, “Texas Fetal Burial Rule: Costs and Implementation Remain Murky Weeks From Possible Start Date,” ABC News, December 15, 2016, <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/texas-fetal-burial-rule-days-costs-implementation-remain/story?id=44163663>.

of Texas has pointed out, because “it will go to any lengths to obscure this fundamental reality: the child in the womb is a human being.”⁹⁹

Notably, there are some bills in Congress on this and similar subjects.¹⁰⁰ For example, one bill would impose certain requirements for interment or burial of fetal remains; another prohibits the disposal of fetal remains into wastewater systems. For the former, Liberty Counsel Action would propose an amendment be added to ensure that women issued abortion pills to be taken outside of a clinical setting, and/or who choose to take possession of the human fetal tissue resulting from the abortion, are required to “transfer the tissue to an entity providing interment or cremation services.” For the latter, Liberty Counsel Action proposes an amendment that would likewise require cremation or burial and ensure that women are provided with instructions on proper disposal, perhaps along with a catch-kit.

2. Encourage the EPA and FDA to Initiate New Environmental Assessments for Both Mifepristone and Misoprostol

The EPA was formed with the following primary functions in mind: “The establishment and enforcement of environmental protection standards consistent with national environmental goals.”¹⁰¹ Given the legal process for environmental assessments was not adhered to when the FDA approved the two-pill abortion drug regimen in 2000, the EPA should encourage the FDA to suspend approval for all chemical abortions pending a comprehensive, legally compliant environmental assessment for both the two-drug abortion protocol and misoprostol-only abortions. Said assessment should be done in accordance with the “Gold Standard Science” principles recently reinstated by executive order.

3. Enforce Current Regulations Prohibiting the Disposing of Human Remains Down the Toilets

While babies are by no means medical waste, for those that disagree that they are a human being and therefore deserving of life (and dignified burial or cremation at the end of life), the result of a chemical abortion requires the need to dispose of what the Clean Water Act and EPA define as medical waste; namely, blood and body parts. Per

⁹⁹ “AG Paxton’s Office Defends Texas Law Requiring Humane Treatment of Fetal Remains,” News Releases | Texas Office of the Attorney General, September 5, 2019, <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxtons-office-defends-texas-law-requiring-humane-treatment-fetal-remains/>.

¹⁰⁰ For examples, see: “H.R. 798—Dignity for Aborted Children Act,” Congress.gov, January 28, 2025, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/798/text>; “H.R. 4131 - Respectful Treatment of Unborn Remains Act of 2025,” Congress.gov, June 25, 2025, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/4131>; “HR 686 — The Protecting the Dignity of Unborn Children Act,” Congress.gov, January 23, 2025, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/686>.

¹⁰¹ Office of the Law Revision Counsel, 42 U.S.C. §4321, accessed May 8, 2025, <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title42/chapter55&edition=prelim>.

numerous state regulations on medical waste, abortion providers that issue chemical abortion pills are meant to follow proper medical waste disposal procedures. Though often there are exemptions to medical waste regulations for medical waste generated at home, the waste is (arguably and in fact) generated by the abortion provider even though it is expelled at home. That is, without the provider's generating act of issuing abortion pills, no medical waste would exist.

While abortion advocates will say it is no different to miscarriage, we would argue that it is in fact entirely different. Consider the following:

1. If a doctor **intentionally** amputates a body part — that is, they **generate medical waste** — they are required to follow medical waste disposal regulations for the proper disposal of said medical waste. Conversely, if one were to *unintentionally* chop off the end of one's own thumb in the kitchen, though said individual **generated medical waste**, said individual is not required to dispose of it per medical waste guidelines.
2. Similarly, in a planned, **intentional** abortion, an abortion provider ends a pregnancy by surgical instrument or by issuing pills — and therefore **generates medical waste**. Hence, whether pregnancy is expelled in a clinic or in a home bathroom, they are responsible for ensuring the medical waste is properly disposed of. It would be illogical to require proper disposal for a surgical abortion but not for a chemical abortion. In a miscarriage, the generation of medical waste is entirely *unintentional* and therefore, entirely different. Furthermore, most women will not willingly flush their baby when the pregnancy is desired.
3. Additionally, consider that in a **home birth**, medical professionals “need to make a plan ahead of time” that includes “proper placenta disposal.”¹⁰² Yet again, in a **home abortion**, “medical professionals” (abortion providers) often simply direct women to sit on the toilet. Such an illogical double standard results in placentas, alongside other body parts like developing cranial structures, limbs, etc., regularly being flushed down the toilet.

Simply put, it is irresponsible, hypocritical, and unsanitary to ignore proper disposal requirements for “medical waste” generated by a planned medical abortion.

Moving Forward

In short, there needs to be a greater focus on prohibiting the disposal of aborted human remains in wastewater, regardless of the drug used in the abortion. Advocating for laws and regulations that require aborted human fetal remains to be buried or cremated both ensures that said remains are not polluting our environment by entering our waterways and would ensure women are faced with the reality that their baby is not just a clump of

¹⁰² “Placenta Waste In Hospitals and At Home,” Red Bags | A MedXwaste Company, September 14, 2018, <https://www.redbags.com/placenta-waste-hospitals-home/>.

cells or “pregnancy tissue” — as the abortion industry would have them believe — but an entirely unique human being deserving of life and dignity at the end of said life.