



Just the Facts

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Ohio bans abortion after a "heartbeat" is detected. Many organizations and medical professionals refer to this as a 6-week ban.

What does the ban actually mean?

- What the State calls a "heartbeat" is actually *embryonic cardiac cell activity*... or electric signals firing in an embryo.
- This activity can be seen with an ultrasound about 6 weeks after the last menstrual period.
- Calling it a "heartbeat" is misleading and makes embryonic development seem more advanced than it really is.



In Ohio, the six-week abortion ban criminalizes doctors who provide abortions, but not people who have them.

There are a few exceptions to Ohio's 6-week abortion ban:

- if the pregnant person faces a life-threatening medical condition (but not for a mental health crisis)
- if the pregnancy is outside the uterus (like with an ectopic pregnancy)

Many people do not know they are pregnant by 6 weeks. Even for those who do know, abortions have often happened after 6 weeks.

Why? Factors outside the patient's control impact when they have an abortion. These factors include structural racism, financial hardship, clinic waiting times, and more (1).

Reference:

(1) Turner, A. N., Brenner-Levoy, J., Rivlin, K., Odum, T., Muzyczka, Z., Norris, A. H., & Bessett, D. (2022). Who loses access to legal abortion with a 6-week ban? *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2022.06.032>

Ohio's 6-week abortion ban