

## Fact Sheet: Digoxin and Feticide

**Digoxin**, or another chemical like potassium chloride (KCl), may be used as a **feticide** to kill the fetus prior to a late 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester abortion.

Digoxin is injected into the fetal heart, fetal body, or amniotic sac to induce fetal demise.<sup>1</sup>

Abortion providers refer to digoxin as “**dig**” (pronounced “didge”) and its use as “dig’ing.”

Digoxin kills the cells and poisons the tissues of the fetus, and so when body parts are being harvested, the abortion must be completed without any digoxin or other feticide:

Changes in termination practice, including newer medical, non-surgical procedures, and the use of agents to ensure delivery of nonviable specimens, have created new obstacles to obtaining sufficient amounts of high quality tissue required for research.<sup>2</sup>

From *Clinician’s Guide for 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester Abortion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. IPAS (2007).

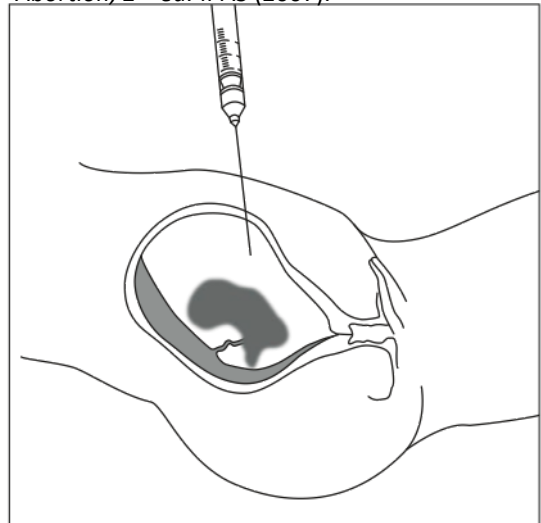


Figure 1. Inject the digoxin intra-amniotically.

Order forms for aborted fetal parts frequently specify “No dig” to ensure that digoxin is withheld.<sup>3</sup>

The absence of digoxin means that the abortion may yield a born-alive infant, because the doctor is attempting to extract the fetus as intact as possible for saleable body parts:

Inducement of fetal death, in conjunction with insertion of an osmotic dilator, prevents the possibility of a live birth prior to the actual D&E procedure.<sup>4</sup>

Some Planned Parenthood affiliates do not use digoxin at all for their later procedures regardless of whether tissue is being harvested.

<sup>1</sup> “Induction of fetal demise before abortion,” Society of Family Planning Clinical Guidelines. *Contraception*, 81 (2010). [http://www.contraceptionjournal.org/article/S0010-7824\(10\)00019-3/pdf](http://www.contraceptionjournal.org/article/S0010-7824(10)00019-3/pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Glass, Ian, Project No. 5R24HD000836-46 “Laboratory of Developmental Biology,” 2010. NIH RePORTER, [http://projectreporter.nih.gov/project\\_info\\_description.cfm?aid=7762234&icde=0](http://projectreporter.nih.gov/project_info_description.cfm?aid=7762234&icde=0)

<sup>3</sup> Task Page 3/20/13, *StemExpress*. <http://www.centerformedicalprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Updated-Task-Assignment-Procurement-Schedule-Wednesday-32013.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Nucatola, Deborah et al, “A randomized pilot study on the effectiveness and side-effects of two doses of digoxin as fetocide when administered intraamniotically or intrafetally prior to second-trimester surgical abortion.” *Contraception* 81 (2010).