The Question That Matters Most

Is It a Spider or Your Little Brother?

Author and apologist Greg Koukl once gave a talk with the claim that he had the only question that mattered in the abortion debate. He started his talk asking his audience to imagine that they are in the kitchen cooking, or maybe in the garage working on the car, when they hear one of their children say from another room, "Mommy, (or Daddy) can I kill it?"

Koukl then told the audience, your natural first response is the key question in the abortion debate. "*What is it?*"

If it is a spider, or a creature on a video game, the answer is "yes," but if it is the child's little brother, or the family cat, the answer is "no." The key question in the abortion debate is similar. What is it we are talking about?

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Some would say it is initially, and for quite some time, just a glob of tissue. Others say it is something much more unique and complex from the very beginning - *it is life*.

Let's Follow the Science

The average length of a full-term pregnancy is 38 weeks. Obstetricians normally use a figure of 40 weeks, but this is actually the time between the first day of the last menstrual period and childbirth. On average, the first day of the last menstrual period (LMP) occurs 2 weeks before fertilization.

Surgical abortion is now limited in Indiana following a law passed in 2022. However, it is still very common with abortion pills. It is estimated that thousands of abortions still occur in Indiana when other states mail in these pills through online sales, undermining our pro-life laws.

Fertilization Fertilization normally takes place within one day of intercourse but can occur up to six days later.

The four defining characteristics of life are present during or soon after fertilization:

- growth
- reproduction
- metabolism
- response to stimuli

At fertilization, the genetic composition of humans is formed. This genetic information determines gender, eye color, hair color, and facial features. It also influences characteristics such as intelligence and personality.

Per the medical textbook The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology, “fertilization” creates “a new combination of chromosomes that is different from that in the cells of either of the parents,” and this “is the beginning of a new human being.

3 Weeks After Fertilization The eyes and spinal cord are visible and the developing brain has two lobes.

4 Weeks After Fertilization The heart is beating and a circulatory system is in place.

Specific brain components and internal organs such as the lungs are beginning to develop and can be identified.

7 Weeks After Fertilization The cerebrum, or largest part of the brain, has divided into hemispheres.

Muscles and nerves begin working together. When the upper lip is tickled, the arms move backwards.

9 Weeks After Fertilization More than 90% of the body structures found in a full-grown human are present. The medical classification changes from an embryo to a fetus. This dividing line was chosen by embryologists because from this point forward, most development involves growth in existing body structures instead of the formation of new ones.

The pre-birth human moves body parts without any outside stimulation.

10 Weeks After Fertilization All parts of the brain and spinal cord are formed. The heart pumps blood to every part of the body.

The whole body is sensitive to touch except for portions of the head. The pre-birth human makes facial expressions.

12 Weeks After Fertilization Electrical signals from the nervous system are measurable. After an abortion, efforts to suckle will sometimes be observed.

14 Weeks After Fertilization The pre-birth human makes coordinated movements of the arms and legs.

16 Weeks After Fertilization The pre-birth human makes eye movements.

18 Weeks After Fertilization The portion of the brain responsible for functions such as reasoning, memory and language (the cerebral cortex) has the same number of nerve cells as a full-grown adult. Pain sensory receptors have spread to all portions of the skin and mucous membranes.

20 Weeks After Fertilization The pre-birth human sleeps, awakes and can hear sounds.

24 Weeks After Fertilization The blink-startle reflex and taste buds are functional. The pre-birth human will swallow more amniotic fluid if a sweetener is added to it.

The grip is strong enough to hold onto an object that is moving up and down.

If born and given specialized care, the survival rate is more than 80%.

28 Weeks after Fertilization If exposed to an 85 decibel noise while sleeping (about as loud as a blender), pre-birth humans exhibit the "motor behaviors that accompany the crying state."

Premature infants born at this time are more sensitive to pain than infants who are born at 38 weeks, and infants who are born at 38 weeks are more sensitive to pain than infants at 3–12 months after birth.

If born and given specialized care, the survival rate for premature babies is more than 90%.

38 Weeks After Fertilization Average point in time when humans are born.

Source: **www.JustFacts.com/abortion**