

“If the Eighth Amendment is repealed it will have an impact, not only on the general public, but those of us working in the health sector whose duty is always to save lives.”

*Eilish Butler, 27, is a nurse from Innishannon, Co. Cork >*



**Eilish’s Story** “The possibility of unrestricted abortion access up to 12 weeks is a major concern for me and many other nurses on the wards. We are shocked, and nervous, that abortion could be available in Ireland up to full term of pregnancy in some instances.

“Science shows us the humanity of the unborn child. A unique human life begins at conception. Our gender, fingerprints, freckles, eye colour and blood type are determined at that moment.

“The heartbeat is detectable just 21 days after conception. At five weeks, a baby’s eyes, ears and nose are forming. The brain is dividing into distinct segments and the buds that will become the legs and arms are growing. At seven weeks the baby moves for the first time. Fingers, toes and eyelids are almost completely formed. By week 12, all vital organs are formed and the baby can clearly be seen kicking and leaping about on 12-week ultrasound scans.

“On April 27, it will be 51 years since the 1967 UK Abortion Act was introduced. Today, in England and Wales 185,000 abortions happen every year, with one in five pregnancies now ending in abortion. If the Eighth Amendment is repealed, Ireland will go from a country that cherishes and protects the lives of mothers and babies *equally* in pregnancy, to a country where unborn babies have no legal protection at all.

“At present doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals work to protect the lives and health of their two patients, mother and baby. If the Eighth Amendment is repealed it will have an impact on both the general public and those of us working in the health sector.”

## What can I do?

Why not express your views on Ireland’s culture of life on social media in a compassionate way? Don’t forget to use #ChooseLife as the hashtag!

## Your Questions

### What happens if a pregnant woman’s life is at risk?

If a seriously ill pregnant woman needs life-saving medical treatment which may, as a secondary effect, put the life of her baby at risk, such treatments are always ethically permissible provided every effort has been made to save the life of both mother and baby. Abortion is the *direct* and *intentional* ending of the life of an unborn baby. The Catholic Church upholds that necessary medical intervention to save the life of a pregnant woman, which results in the unintended death of her unborn baby, is never considered an abortion.

### What if the baby dies?

If a baby dies as a result of life-saving medical treatment to save the life of a pregnant woman, it is extremely sad and a tragic outcome. If the intention of the doctor is not to directly and intentionally end the baby’s life, then this is not an abortion.