

France 'risks' abortion pill shortage as US stocks up: gender body

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France risks shortages of abortion pills as US states build up stocks during an intensifying legal and political battle over reproductive rights, the country's gender equality authority has warned.

France gets most of its [abortion](#) drugs from a largely US-owned manufacturer, and supplies are already under pressure from a shortage in raw materials.

In addition, US states "are building up stocks to mitigate a possible halt in production or sales of mifepristone and misoprostol," France's High Council for Equality between Men and Women (HCE) said Tuesday.

"The American situation poses the risk of a shortage," the organization said.

Abortion pills account for around 70 percent of pregnancy terminations in France. Women take a dose of mifepristone and then a dose of misoprostol, which triggers expulsion of the embryo, 36 to 48 hours later.

The US Supreme Court is expected to rule Wednesday on a lower tribunal's finding that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) wrongly approved mifepristone for use in 2000, which has sowed legal chaos in reproductive health provision.

The case is part of a wider campaign by conservatives against [abortion](#)

[rights](#), after the right-leaning Supreme Court last year overturned the Roe v. Wade ruling that guaranteed access to pregnancy termination for half a century.

In France, President Emmanuel Macron promised last month that he would soon present a law enshrining the right to abortion in the constitution.

Production delays

But on access to the medications, the non-governmental Observatory for Transparency in Medication Policy (OTMeds) warned weeks ago that it was difficult or impossible to get misoprostol from some pharmacies in several cities and regions, including Paris.

Health Minister Francois Braun on Wednesday insisted that it was "possible everywhere" for women to access misoprostol, telling broadcaster RMC that there are "three months of stocks" and "no shortage".

Even where the drug is not available in pharmacies, medical centers offering abortion have always had supplies, he added.

The ANSM medicines authority on Tuesday said that largely US-owned manufacturer Nordic Pharma, which supplies all of France's misoprostol, warned it late last year of production delays to one of its brands, Gymiso.

Manufacturing of its other [misoprostol](#) brand, Misoone, has been hit by a shortage of crucial raw materials.

"Tensions" in supply "are in the process of being resolved by distributing tens of thousands of boxes of Gymiso last week and of Misoone from

this week," the ANSM added.

The body is also having Misoone imported from Italy.

"It's good that the ANSM is finally recognizing that there's been a problem in recent weeks," OTMeds founder Pauline Londeix said.

"But it remains to be seen if shortages of this medication will really end. It's yet another example of how an ultra-concentrated market can put our health security at risk," she added.

France has suffered shortages of other medicines over the winter including antibiotics such as amoxicillin.

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