

## You Have the Right To...

- You have the right to change your mind about your adoption plan at any point before the baby is born.
- After the baby is born and before you have signed legal consent or paperwork for the adoption, you have the right to be informed about the law and your ability to change your mind and timeframe to revoke your consent to the adoption.

## Your Additional Rights...

- Free counseling to help with your decision.
- Continued counseling even after your rights have been terminated.
- Select and meet the adoptive family.
- Place your baby directly from the hospital with a family. Foster care is not required.
- Seek an open adoption including picture and letter updates as well as visits.
- Help from the hospital social worker:
  - about your decision
  - if you are feeling pressured

## Virginia Office

1407 Stephanie Way, Suite H

Chesapeake, VA 23320

**757.361.0008**

**Serving the entire state of Virginia including but not limited to:**

Greater Chesapeake Area

Greater Richmond Area

Northern Virginia

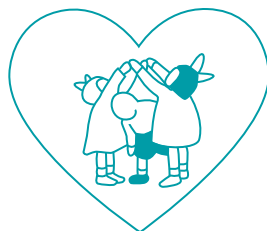
Lynchburg, Roanoke & Surrounding Area

*Speak with a counselor in confidence*

**24 hours a day**

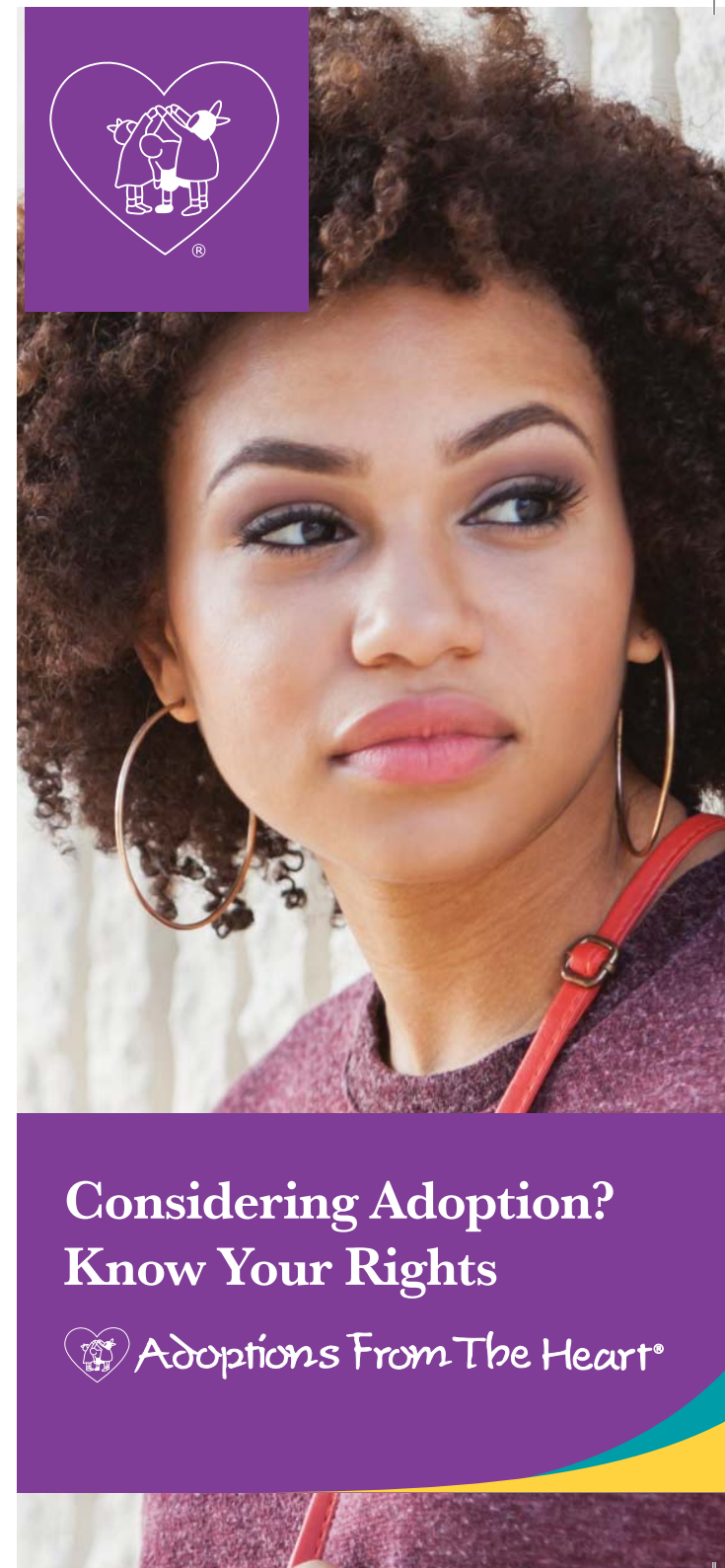
**800-355-5500**

**[afth.org/pregnant](http://afth.org/pregnant)**



**Adoptions From The Heart®**

**AFTH is a private, non-profit, non-sectarian agency licensed in PA, NJ, DE, VA, CT and NY.**



**Considering Adoption?  
Know Your Rights**

 **Adoptions From The Heart®**

## You Should Know

### *Virginia Adoption Law States:*

**1** In order to place your child for adoption you are required to sign consent paperwork. The consent cannot be signed until after the baby is born.

If the birth father is available, he will also be required to sign consent paperwork. The law allows him to sign before or after birth.

If you are or were married during the year prior to birth, your husband is considered the legal father and will be required to sign consent paperwork whether or not he is the father of your baby.

**2** After you have signed the consent paperwork, **VA law allows you to change your mind** about adoption and parent your baby. It must be done in writing **within 10 days** from birth or 7 days from signing consent, whichever comes later. It must be delivered to the agency office within the required timeframe.



## Other Important Information

- You **cannot** accept money for your child to be placed for adoption.
- Adopting parents living in VA **cannot pay for living expenses** for an expecting parent unless she cannot work because of the pregnancy and has a written doctor note. Prospective adoptive parents can however pay for legal and medical expenses.
- If legal fees or medical expenses are paid by adopting parents, this does not mean that you must place your baby. If you change your mind, **you do not have to repay them.**
- You have the right to have counseling about whether or not to choose adoption for your baby. This **counseling must be provided, at no cost to you.**
- Adoptions are legal in VA when done through an agency, or privately through an attorney. However, **agencies, unlike attorneys, provide free counseling before and after placement.**

**3** Uncontested adoptions in VA have no further court hearings that require notification or presence of the birth family.

For birthparents under the age of 18, state law may require some involvement by a parent or guardian. Please know that we will work with you to develop an adoption plan that is most comfortable for you.

Typically, you will not be required to attend the hearing however there are some situations which would require your presence. Your social worker will be at the hearing.

This brochure was prepared for you by

 **Adoptions From The Heart®**

*If you need more information after reading this brochure, ask to speak to a hospital or clinic social worker, or call Adoptions From The Heart.*

