

## What is fistula?

Obstetric fistula is a devastating childbirth injury that affects more than two million women and girls living in poverty in the developing world (some fistula sufferers are as young as ten years old). Fistula is prevalent in Africa, Asia and some Arab states and it robs young girls of their childhoods and women of their dignity. Motherhood in much of the world is a dangerous activity. In Swahili, the word for pregnancy means “carrying death,” an apt phrase given that 1 in 16 women in sub-Saharan Africa will die in pregnancy or childbirth.

Obstetric fistula is caused by obstructed labor. Ninety percent of women living with fistula have endured the death of their babies during prolonged childbirth lasting up to five days. As a result of pressure from the baby’s head on soft tissues in the birth passage, the mother is left with a hole from her bladder or rectum to the outside world. Through this hole she will leak urine, and sometimes feces, continuously for the rest of her life. This debilitated woman, who has lost her child, is pushed to the edges of society, unable to board a bus, enter a hospital, pray communally or share a meal with others.

## Can it be stopped?

Obstetric fistula is both preventable and treatable. Treatment involves a surgical procedure that costs an average of \$300 in developing countries. Prevention can cost even less. An emergency caesarean section costs an average of just \$60 and community education often costs only pennies per person.

One By One supports medical facilities, community-led programs and qualified non-governmental organizations that work to combat fistula’s root causes. Such causes include poor access to emergency obstetric care and transportation as well as more systemic issues like child marriage and girls’ education and empowerment.



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## What is One By One?

One By One contributes to the elimination of obstetric fistula worldwide by engaging the public and supporting those who work to treat and prevent fistula in the developing world. One By One is a Seattle-based nonprofit organization that aims to inspire people, empower solutions and make grants to help end fistula worldwide.

## How can I help?

One By One invites you to join the fight to end fistula by hosting a giving circle. Giving circle hosts contribute \$30 and ask nine friends, family members or colleagues to do the same. With ten donors each contributing \$30, the giving circle will raise \$300, the equivalent cost of pre-operative care, fistula surgery and rehabilitation for one woman.

With funds raised through giving circles, One By One supports organizations that treat and prevent fistula in the developing world and empowers a growing number of women’s health activists in North America and beyond. Your simple actions make a huge difference in the world!

To start your giving circle, visit [www.fightfistula.org](http://www.fightfistula.org) and click “Start a giving circle” in the upper left corner of the page. All the tools you need are available online. We’re happy to support your efforts or mail you a packet of printed materials. Call us at (206) 297-1418 or email [info@fightfistula.org](mailto:info@fightfistula.org).

## [www.fightfistula.org](http://www.fightfistula.org)

The One By One website makes it easy to learn about fistula, start your own giving circle or contribute to the cause. One By One provides online resources for giving circle leaders including sample emails, print-ready invitations, e-cards and a short advocacy video that can be shown at events.

Visit [www.fightfistula.org](http://www.fightfistula.org) to start your giving circle today!

## How to contribute

To donate online, visit [www.fightfistula.org](http://www.fightfistula.org). There you can start a giving circle or make a secure online contribution. Gifts to One By One are tax deductible in the United States.

To give by mail, send checks payable to One By One to:

One By One  
8314 Greenwood Avenue N., #8,  
Seattle, WA 98103

Questions? Ideas? Call (206) 297-1418 or email [info@fightfistula.org](mailto:info@fightfistula.org).