



From which point on does an embryo represent a life worthy of protection?

Position 1: From fertilization!

Reasoning (example):

The development of a fertilized egg cell into an infant is a continuous process, and any attempt to determine at what point of development the human individual begins would be an artificial definition. A human embryo is an embryonic human being, comparable to an infant, who is also a human being

at the infant stage. And although an embryo does not yet have all the characteristics of a full-grown human, it has the potential to develop into one and should therefore be treated with the necessary respect for the dignity of a human being.

Position 2: At implantation in the uterus!

Reasoning (example):

Successful implantation is the prerequisite for embryonic development. Implantation takes place about six days after fertilization. From implantation on, the embryo must be treated with the necessary respect, namely humanely. In nature, it often

happens that the fertilized egg is not successfully implanted in the uterus but is rejected. We therefore have no knowledge of these embryos. In fertility treatment (in vitro fertilization), this stage is only an accumulation of cells in an artificial environment.





Position 3: The embryo becomes worthier of protection with time!

Reasoning (example):

When someone dies, people tend to feel the loss differently, depending on how old the person was. A fertilized egg prior to implantation in the uterus may therefore receive less attention than an embryo or a baby already born. More than half of fertilized eggs are lost for natural reasons prior to implantation. So, if this loss is considered part of the natural process, the use of some embryos in stem cell research should not cause us any moral concerns.

In our legal system, people are granted personality rights only after birth. But there are other protective rights that the embryo already enjoys before birth. There are some stages of embryonic development that could give rise to increasing status worthy of protection:

1. Implantation of the embryo into the uterine wall, approximately six days after fertilization
2. The appearance of the primitive streak, which is associated with the first sign of a developing nervous system, approximately at day 14. After the 14th day, it is impossible for the embryo to divide to form twins. Until then, the embryo can still divide to become two or more fetuses, that is, multiple individuals. Likewise, further development can cease completely.
3. The stage of development at which the fetus would be able to survive outside the uterus (approximately 24 weeks) if born prematurely
4. Actual birth (after approximately 40 weeks)

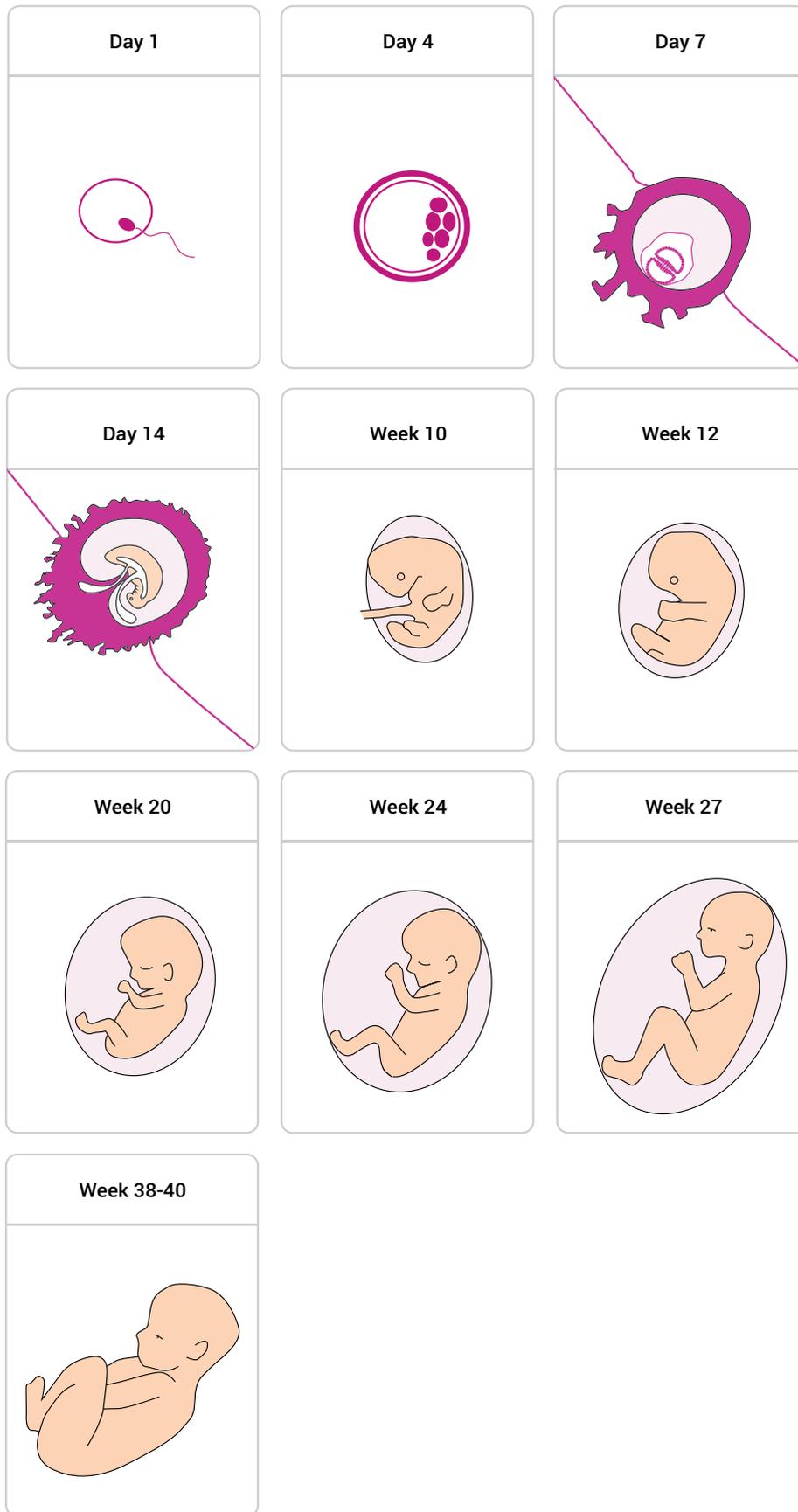
Position 4: Only after it is viable outside the womb!

Reasoning (example):

Fertilized human egg cells remain simply parts of the human body until they have developed far enough to survive on their own. We should show the same respect for a blastocyst as we would also show to

the property of others. If we destroy a blastocyst prior to implantation, we do it no harm, as it has no hopes, desires, expectations, goals or intentions that we could harm.





Day 1

Conception or fertilization: sperm and oocyte unite.

Day 4

The blastocyst forms. The cells separate into placental cells and other cells, the inner cell mass that later forms the fetus. In the laboratory, embryonic stem cells are harvested at about this time from the inner cell mass of the embryo, which is destroyed in the process.

Day 7

The embryo is implanted in the womb.

Day 14

The first nervous system cells are produced. Many embryos die naturally before reaching this stage. In many countries, for example the United Kingdom, this also represents the limit for embryo research. In Germany, destructive embryo research is prohibited.

Week 10

All organs and extremities are already formed. From this stage onward, the embryo is regarded as a fetus. The gender can now be determined.

Week 12

The fetus now makes controlled movements and looks human. It has facial features. In Germany, this is the legal limit of impunity for a termination of pregnancy, with the exception of medical grounds.

Week 18-20

The mother can feel the movements of the fetus.

Week 24

The fetus reacts to light and sounds. Premature births have a chance of survival from this point on.

Week 27

The eyes open.

Week 38-40

The baby is completely developed.

