

Medical Abortion Take Home Instructions

How To Prepare

- Take pain medications 30 minutes before taking the misoprostol tablets.
- Insert 4 misoprostol tablets as directed by your doctor within 72 hours of taking the Mifeprex (mifepristone, “abortion pill”) in the office.
 - Buccal: Rinse your mouth out with water. Place 2 misoprostol tablets between your gum and cheek on each side (4 tablets total). Let the tablets dissolve. After 1 hour, swallow the tablet parts that are left with a sip of water. Do not eat, drink, or chew gum while the tablets are dissolving.

OR

- Vaginal: Moisten the 4 tablets with a little bit of water and use your finger to insert them as high up into the vagina as possible. Sit or lie down for 30 minutes after placing the tablets so they don’t fall out.
- Because the medical abortion medications will cause you to have bleeding and cramping (and possibly nausea or diarrhea), arrange for the following:
 - Time off from work
 - Child care for the day
 - A support person
 - Heating pad or hot water bottle
 - Fluids and light foods (water, ginger ale, broth, jell-o, crackers, etc.)
 - Pads

What To Expect

Bleeding

Most women will have bleeding that starts within 1-4 hours of taking the misoprostol. You should expect bleeding that is heavier than your normal period. You may pass blood clots (some clots may even be the size of lemons or oranges). The bleeding should be heaviest during the first several hours and should then decrease. There is a very small risk of excessive bleeding, which may require you to have a surgical abortion (D&C) or receive other medical treatment. If you do not have any bleeding within 24 hours of taking the misoprostol, please call us.

Cramping

It is normal to have cramping with this type of abortion. More severe lower abdominal cramping may last for several hours when the pregnancy tissue is passing out of the body. After the pregnancy passes, the cramping should decrease. Take pain medications as prescribed and use a heating pad or hot water bottle as needed.

Pregnancy Tissue

You may pass the pregnancy tissue at an unexpected time or place. Most women will not see an embryo pass (a 7 week embryo is smaller than a grain of rice). You may see a blood clot or a small white clump of tissue.

Other Side Effects

Fatigue, nausea, stomach upset, and diarrhea are common. These symptoms should go away within a few days.

Menstrual Cycle (Periods)

After the initial bleeding of the abortion, you may continue to have light bleeding or spotting for several weeks. Your first period may be lighter or heavier than usual. Your periods may be irregular for the first few months after the abortion. You should carry sanitary products (pads, panty liners, or tampons) with you until your periods return to normal.

Contraception (Birth Control)

Most women are able to become pregnant again very quickly after abortion, usually before they have had their next menstrual period. You should start your birth control method the day after your medical abortion (or as directed by your doctor).

If you have sex without a reliable birth control method (you haven't started a method, didn't use a condom, the condom broke, etc.) you should take emergency contraception pills as soon as possible and call us. One type of emergency birth control pill, Plan B One Step (or Next Choice) is available over the counter (no prescription needed) for women of all ages. Other types of emergency birth control need a prescription.

Please call us anytime if you need birth control before your follow-up appointment.

Exercise & Rest

Most women prefer to take it easy for a few days after an abortion. You should not exercise strenuously for the first week (running, tough work-outs, etc.), as cramping or bleeding may happen. Let your body be your guide.

Feelings

Women experience a variety of emotions when they are pregnant and when they have an abortion. The most common feeling after abortion is relief. However, some women may experience happiness or sadness. Some of these feelings may be stronger because of the hormonal changes that happen with pregnancy and abortion. If you are feeling consistently sad or distressed, please contact us or your referring doctor.

Confidential telephone counseling is available to women who have had an abortion. These counseling services are not affiliated with Kapiolani Medical Center for Women & Children or your doctor. Two free telephone counseling services are:

- Backline: (1-888-493-0092)
- Exhale: (1-866-4-EXHALE)
- More resources can be found under “Emotional Support” on our webpage.
 - http://hawaiifamilyplanning.org/wp-content/forms/Emotional_Support.pdf

Things to Avoid

- Avoid aspirin and alcohol until your follow-up appointment, because these may increase your bleeding and worsen stomach upset.
- Do not use tampons for 2 weeks and until seen for your follow-up appointment (use pads instead).
- Don’t have sex for at least 2 weeks and until seen for your follow-up appointment.
- Don’t soak in a tub bath or spa, or go swimming for 2 weeks (take a shower instead).

Follow-Up

You absolutely must be seen for a follow-up appointment in 2 weeks (or as directed by your doctor). This is the only way to confirm that you are no longer pregnant and that your pregnancy has passed completely.

Contact Us

- Contact us right away if you have:
 - Bleeding that is more than 2 completely soaked pads per hour for more than 2 hours in a row.
 - Persistent feelings that you might pass out or faint.
 - Pain that is uncontrolled with prescribed medications, rest, and heating pads.
 - A fever higher than 100.5 F.
 - Severe vomiting or diarrhea lasting more than 4-6 hours.
 - Symptoms of an allergic reaction (rash, shortness of breath).
- If you are having an emergency, please go to an emergency room.
- Please call the office during business hours Monday-Friday:
 - Kapiolani Medical Center for Women & Children, Suite 801: 808-203-6580
 - Queen’s Physician’s Office Building 3 (POB 3): 808-218-7900
- After business hours, and on weekends and holidays, call the Kapiolani operator and ask to speak to the UCERA ob/gyn doctor on call: 808-983-6000.