

Surgical Abortion Take Home Instructions

What To Do

- Finish all antibiotics as directed. If you vomit within 1 hour of taking a dose of antibiotics (or are unable to complete the antibiotics for any reason), please contact us.
- 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 follow-up (use pads instead).
- Don't have sex for at least 2 weeks and until seen for follow-up.
- Don't soak in a tub bath or spa, or go swimming for 2 weeks (take a shower instead).

What To Expect

Bleeding

Right after your abortion you may have bleeding that is like a heavy period. You may pass small blood clots. Right after the abortion you may also have vaginal discharge that looks yellow/brown or ashy (from the cleaning ointment and medications used during the abortion).

You may continue to have light bleeding or spotting for several weeks. This bleeding may stop and re-start. Your first period may be lighter or heavier than usual. Your periods may be irregular for the first few months after the abortion. You might find it helpful to carry sanitary products (pads, panty liners, or tampons) with you until your periods return to normal.

Cramping

You may have menstrual-like cramping after the procedure. This cramping should lessen over time. Take pain medications as prescribed and use a heating pad or hot water bottle as needed.

Other Side Effects

You may have nausea, stomach upset, or diarrhea from medications given for the abortion. These symptoms should go away within a few days. Nausea and vomiting related to the pregnancy should go away within a few days.

Especially after 2nd trimester abortion, women may experience breast tenderness, swelling, or lactation (milk production). This might happen within a week of the abortion and usually lasts several days. Wearing a tight-fitting sports bra, using ice packs, and taking prescribed ibuprofen will help with these symptoms.

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 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 and call us. One type of emergency birth control pill, Plan B (or Next Choice) is available by asking a pharmacist at a drug store (if you are age 17 or older). 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-EHXALE)
- More resources can be found under "Emotional Support" on our webpage.
 - http://hawaiifamilyplanning.org/wp-content/forms/Emotional_Support.pdf

Follow-Up

You should be seen for a follow-up appointment about 2 weeks after your abortion (or as directed by your doctor). If you do not live on Oahu you should make an appointment to be seen by your referring doctor.

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.
 - Pus-like vaginal discharge.
 - 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.