

Surgical Abortion (First Trimester)

Surgical abortion, also known as suction aspiration abortion, can be performed in a one-day procedure in the first trimester of pregnancy (up to 14 weeks after last menstrual period). The procedure is done in the doctor's office with local anesthesia and oral pain-relieving medications.

You will be in a private room during your health education, exam, procedure and recovery. The entire visit will take around three hours, but up to 5-6 depending on your gestational age and other medical indications. Please arrange for someone to drive you home after the procedure.

Preparation

When you check in for your appointment, we will verify your insurance information, collect your co-payment/deductible if applicable and ask you to complete some forms. Termination services at UCLA are integrated into the general OB/GYN practice. Women are not identified in the reception area as desiring pregnancy termination and there are no signs advertising our clinic. This ensures the privacy and safety of our patients and staff.

Shortly after you arrive, one of our medical assistants (MAs) will bring you into a triage room, where she will take your blood pressure, pulse and weight, as well as update your medication history. The MA will bring you to a private room where you will meet your medical team member. You will discuss and learn about pregnancy options, the abortion procedure and various birth control methods. UCLA is a teaching hospital and your medical team will be comprised of an obstetrician-gynecologist with specialized training and interest in abortion provision and family planning, as well as fellow and resident physicians, and possibly a medical student and/or health educator. We will review your medical history, perform an ultrasound exam to determine your pregnancy's gestation, and give you medications. You will receive oral pain medications as needed. We may give you additional medicine to soften your cervix. If you brought a support person with you, he or she may stay with you during the health education and procedure as is helpful to you.

Procedure

You will be awake during the procedure, but the medicine we give you will alleviate your discomfort. The doctor will:

1. Use a speculum to view inside your vagina
2. Clean your vagina and cervix with gauze soaked in soap
3. Apply numbing medication to your cervix
4. Dilate your cervix, the tight opening to your uterus, with thin metal rods
5. Insert a narrow flexible tube into your uterus
6. Apply gentle suction to the other end of the tube to remove all of the pregnancy tissue

Ultrasound guidance may be used during your procedure.

Toward the end of the procedure, you may feel heavier cramping that feels similar to menstrual cramps in your uterus, as it is shrinking down to its usual size. Most of the procedure time is spent preparing your body for the procedure. The suction portion only takes about a minute and the entire procedure takes around 15 minutes.

Recovery

After the procedure, you should remain resting for a few minutes. You will probably have some cramping and spotting. We will provide you with a heat pack and a menstrual pad. When you feel able, you may get dressed. Your nurse will then give you instructions on how to take care of your body. The doctor will give you antibiotics and a prescription for birth control if you desire it. You will have arranged ahead of time to have someone drive you home. You should go immediately home to rest and let the medications wear off. You should be able to return to normal activities, such as work and school, the next day.

Follow-Up Visits

You will return to the clinic for a follow up appointment one to two weeks after your procedure to confirm that your procedure is completed and that you are healing well. It is important that you come to this appointment so your doctor can check for any problems. At this visit, you will be given a prescription for a birth control method if you did not get one after your procedure.

What to bring with you to the appointment:

- Identification card
- Insurance card
- Any medical records and contact information for your prior providers
- List of all your medications, including prescription and over-the-counter
- Name of your preferred pharmacy
- Comfortable/warm clothes
- Light snack
- iPod with relaxing music
- Supportive person whose presence will be comforting to you

What not to bring:

- Small children, unless you have someone who can wait with them in the waiting room
- Valuables
- Pets