



Abortion at Home

Information Leaflet



States of
Guernsey

Medication

You will have been provided with a pack of medication which will include:

- ▶ Mifepristone for stage 1 of the abortion
- ▶ Misoprostol for stage 2
- ▶ some pain relief

The first medicine, mifepristone, ends the pregnancy. It works by blocking the hormone progesterone. Without progesterone, the lining of the uterus breaks down and the pregnancy cannot continue.

The second medicine, misoprostol helps to soften the cervix and makes the womb contract, which can cause cramping, bleeding and loss of the pregnancy similar to a miscarriage.

The medication is for your own personal use in this current pregnancy. The medication must be taken before you reach 10 week gestation (as calculated by scan).

Stage One

Medication

- ▶ Take the Mifepristone by swallowing it with water
- ▶ If you are sick within 1 hour of taking the Mifepristone, you will need to contact Victoria Ward and return for another tablet that day. If you vomit later than this, you should continue with the second part of the procedure. If you have any concerns, please contact Victoria Wing for advice.

- ▶ If you are breast feeding you can carry on doing so safely. Small traces of the abortion medication could pass into your breast milk but only temporarily. You do not need to stop breastfeeding during the medical abortion. Although it is unlikely, some drugs may cause nausea and vomiting or drowsiness in the infant.
- ▶ You should not take alcohol or smoke once you have taken this tablet. Smoking and consumption of alcohol can affect the medication efficiency and increase bleeding and pain.
- ▶ Most people can continue their daily routine after taking the mifepristone.

Bleeding

- ▶ You may get some period-like cramp pains and/or some vaginal bleeding with small clots. Taking the pain relief provided according to the manufacturer's instructions may help.
- ▶ If you do have some bleeding you should use sanitary pads, not tampons, to reduce the risk of infection.

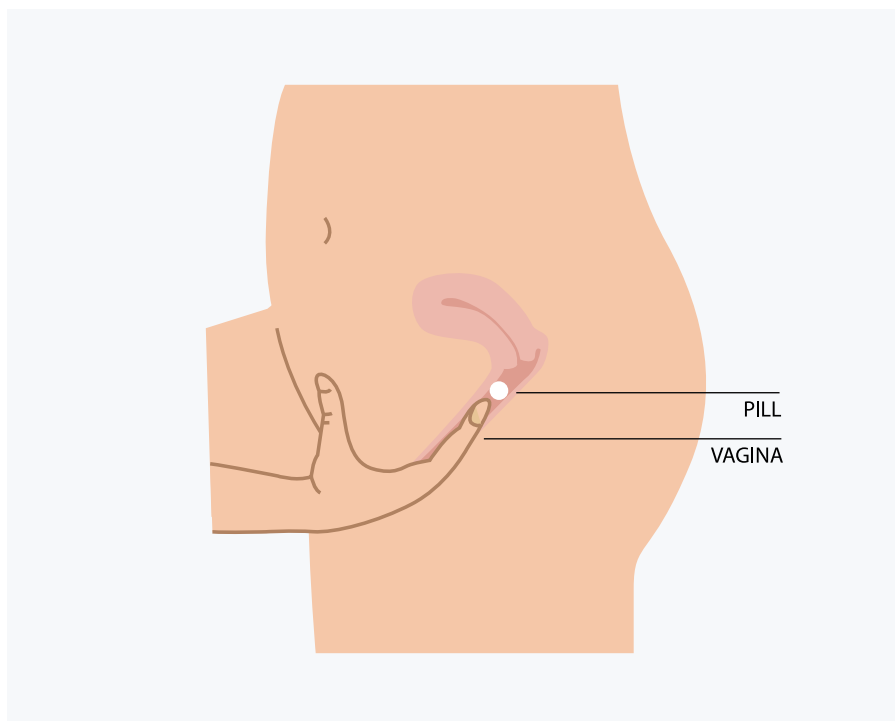
Bleeding

- ▶ It is advisable to make arrangements for a suitable adult to be with you throughout the second stage of the procedure. It is also advisable that you ensure you have access to a telephone and transport, in case you need to return to the hospital urgently.

Medication

- ▶ You will have been provided with a box containing 4 small white hexagonal tablets. These tablets are called Misoprostol (200µg). You will be placing these 4 tablets into your vagina. The 4 tablets provide the required dose of 800µg. Misoprostol is a prostaglandin. This medication softens the cervix (the opening into the uterus) and helps the cervix to open helping your body to pass the pregnancy.
- ▶ The Misoprostol tablets should be placed in the vagina by yourself 24 – 48 hours after the oral Mifepristone.
- ▶ You can take some Ibuprofen or Co-codamol 10 minutes before you plan to take the misoprostol. Please see page 6. for details on dosage.
- ▶ Choose a time that is convenient for you. We would encourage you to pick a time when you are not working and do not have any significant commitments, such as childcare.
 - ▷ First empty your bladder.
 - ▷ Wash your hands thoroughly.
 - ▷ Remove the 4 tablets of misoprostol from the blister pack.
 - ▷ Using your index finger (the one next to your thumb), push all 4 of the Misoprostol tablets into the vagina.

The most ideal place is to push the tablets behind the cervix at the top of the vagina. As long as you push them as high in the vagina as you can, they will work. Some women will place all 4 tablets at once. Some women will place them one at a time. Warm water can be used for lubrication if necessary. Some women find this process easier when standing up. Others prefer to lie down.



- ▷ After placing the tablets in the vagina, we suggest that you lie on the bed for one hour.
- ▷ If the tablets fall out in the first 30 minutes, re-insert them.
- ▷ The tablets might come out of the vagina when you start to bleed. If the tablets come out at this point don't worry as the medication will have been absorbed within 30 minutes.
- ▶ Once the Misoprostol is administered, you may experience some vaginal bleeding, along with stomach pains, cramps and possible vomiting and diarrhoea. It can take 1-4 hours for the bleeding to start. The pregnancy will be expelled approximately 4 to 6 hours after the tablets have been inserted.

Pain

You will have cramp like period like pains. The strength of these pains varies a lot between different women. They tend to be similar to your own period pains. If pain is severe this is usually short lived and is relieved when the pregnancy passes.

- ▶ Pain relief can be taken before you take the misoprostol, or if preferred when you start to feel cramps getting stronger:
 - ▷ Take 400-600mg of ibuprofen immediately. Ibuprofen comes in two strengths:

If you are using 200mg strength ibuprofen, do not take more than 12 tablets in 48 hours.

If you are using 400mg strength ibuprofen, do not take more than 6 tablets in 48 hours.
 - ▷ You can also take one or two tablets of Co-codamol 30/500 every 4-6 hours as needed. Do not take more than 8 tablets in 24 hours.
 - ▷ A hot water bottle, heat pack or warm bath can also be helpful.
 - ▷ Being mobile and upright can also help the treatment progress.

If you cannot take any one of these pain killers (e.g. due to an allergy) then the others should still work well.

We do not recommend using aspirin as pain relief, but if you are taking it for a medical reason you should continue to do so.

If your pain has not been reduced after following the advice above, or you would like more support please call **225122 (Victoria Wing)**.

Bleeding and cramps - passing the pregnancy

Everybody is different, but the cramps usually start within a few hours of inserting the misoprostol and the pregnancy is usually passed with 1-2 days. You may continue to bleed for up to 8 weeks.

You are likely to experience strong cramping and bleeding which can last a few hours, but pain and bleeding is different for each person.

During this time, it would be expected for you to pass the pregnancy tissue and most people will pass blood clots which can be as large as a lemon.

As the gestation increases the pregnancy tissue may be more recognisable but most people will not clearly see a fetus.

You may be more comfortable having a private toilet nearby to pass the pregnancy. You can also dispose of pregnancy products by wrapping them up within a plastic bag and putting in a normal waste bin.

Once the pregnancy has been passed, both the pain and bleeding will usually reduce. It may be quite heavy for a day or two as your womb returns to its normal size. It is usual to pass clots for a few days, but it should get less each day.

It is normal to have some bleeding or spotting for 2 to 4 weeks after a medical abortion and for some people it can be for up to 8 weeks after. This bleeding may come and go and be quite irregular.

Side Effects

Side effects of the medication are fairly common and may include:

- ▶ Nausea or vomiting
- ▶ Headaches
- ▶ Diarrhoea
- ▶ Fever/chills, temporary flushes, or sweats

Any side effects may begin fairly soon after taking the medication, but usually settle once the pregnancy is passed

How do I know the abortion has worked?

The tablets work for most people but if you have any of the following, please contact 238565 (MSG Gynaecology department)

- ▶ None or only light bleeding by 48-72 hours after taking the second tablets,
- ▶ The pregnancy symptoms have not improved/resolved by 7 days after the second tablets,
- ▶ You still feel that you are pregnant 7 days after the second tablets,
- ▶ You have a positive pregnancy test 3 weeks after the abortion (please see the "Follow Up" section for more information on pregnancy testing).

We may need to book you in for a follow up appointment to check the abortion has been successful.

Abortion Aftercare

It is important that you take all the time you need to look after yourself. We are here to support you. Here are our recommendations to help your recovery after a medical abortion:

- ▶ You can use any sanitary wear during and after the abortion, but sanitary pads can be easier to track your bleeding. On days your bleeding is heavy, we recommend wearing a suitable pad such as the thick maternity ones. If you use tampons or menstrual cups, please consider using sanitary pads instead for 48 hours after taking the second tablets (misoprostol) and if you use them, please change them regularly.
- ▶ Drink plenty of water and do not drink alcohol until you feel you are able to.
- ▶ Your vagina will clean itself with natural discharge. Do not use a douche or use any soap inside the vagina as this can disrupt the normal bacteria and increase the risk of infection.
- ▶ You may feel light-headed during or immediately after your abortion. For your safety, don't have a shower/bath if you are feeling lightheaded.
- ▶ It is safe to have a bath, to go swimming and to exercise as soon as you feel comfortable to do so.
- ▶ It is safe to have sex when you feel ready. Please remember that fertility returns quickly after a medical abortion. You can get pregnant again within a week after the abortion.

Serious complications have warning signs

Please call Victoria Wing straight away on 225122 if you experience:

- ▶ If after taking your first tablet you experience heavy vaginal bleeding or pass clots.
- ▶ Very heavy bleeding that soaks through more than 2 sanitary pads an hour for 2 hours. These pads should be suitable for a heavy flow.
- ▶ Abdominal pain or discomfort that is not helped by pain relief medication, or by using a heat pad.

Infection after an abortion is uncommon, but if it occurs it is easily treated. If you have:

- ▶ Vaginal discharge that smells unpleasant
- ▶ Fever, feeling shivery or like you have the flu lasting more than 24 hours

Please call **Victoria Wing** on **255122** for advice

Sepsis can be caused by an infection and whilst after an abortion it is rare, it can be serious especially if it is not detected. Symptoms of sepsis can be like having the flu at first.

If you have any of the signs below it is important to seek urgent medical advice by calling 999:

- ▶ Confusion
- ▶ Slurred speech
- ▶ Extreme shivering
- ▶ Severe muscle pain
- ▶ Being unable to urinate
- ▶ Severe breathlessness
- ▶ Cold, clammy and pale or blotchy skin
- ▶ Loss of consciousness

Follow up and pregnancy testing

You will have been offered the option of either a follow up appointment at the MSG with a gynaecologist or the option to take a pregnancy test at home.

If you have chosen to see a doctor at the MSG you will usually be seen a few weeks after the abortion. At this appointment the doctor will ask you some questions to check how you are, occasionally they may recommend a scan or other investigations, such as taking swabs or a blood test.

If you have opted to take a pregnancy test at home you will find one included in the envelope you were provided with this leaflet. It is important that you take this test 3 weeks after you have taken the second lot of tablets, the misoprostol. It is important that you wait for 3 weeks after your abortion before taking the pregnancy test and use our specially calibrated test (not a shop-bought one).

If your pregnancy test is positive, please ring **MSG** Gynaecology team on **238565**. Our team can help you to book an appointment for an assessment, and further treatment if needed.

Using contraception

If you have recently had an abortion, you may have lots of things on your mind and the last thing you may be thinking about is contraception. You may feel like not having sex anytime soon or you may feel back to your 'normal self'. Remember, everyone is different, as well as how quickly they recover, but research shows that 50% of women have sex within 2 weeks of having an abortion.

You can ovulate (release an egg) as soon as 8 days after an abortion so if you want to prevent pregnancy it is important to start contraception as soon as possible after an abortion.

Depending on your individual health and preferences there are various contraceptive options available. Hormonal methods such as birth control pills, patches, vaginal ring or injectables can be effective in regulating hormones and preventing ovulation. Additionally, intrauterine contraceptive devices (IUCDs) offer a highly effective and long-term solution as they can be left in place for several years. Barrier methods like condoms are also reliable in preventing both pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. It is essential to discuss your options with a healthcare provider to determine the most suitable contraceptive method based on your health, lifestyle, and future family planning goals. A full range of contraceptive options is available from Choices www.choices.gg tel:714954 or from your GP.

Choices offers flexible appointments, and the friendly staff have time to discuss your specific requirements or help guide you towards choosing an effective method of your choice. We do not wish for any method to be prohibitive due to cost so please discuss with the clinic staff if you wish to arrange an interest-free payment plan.

If you are under 21, all contraception is provided free by Choices tel:714954 ; The Orchard Centre tel:227707 or your GP.

If you need to talk

Everyone is different and will experience a range of emotions around the decision to end a pregnancy. You may feel relief, sometimes sad, or a mixture of both. All these feelings are normal. Seeking support from counselling can aid in processing emotions and making informed decisions about contraception. Free counselling is available through Choices by contacting Cleo Martel directly on 07781 125942 or email cleo@calm.gg



Useful contact numbers

This document contains information on whom to call in specific situations. The contact numbers are provided in this section as a quick reference. If you are unsure who to contact please do not hesitate to call Victoria Wing to clarify.

For emergency advice 24 hours a day please call **Victoria Wing** on **225122**.

For non-emergency advice within office hours please call the **MSG** on **238565** and ask for the gynaecology team.

For advice on contraception please contact **Choices** on **714954**, **The Orchard Clinic** on **227707** or your GP at the surgery you are registered at.

To contact the counselling service please call **07781 125942**.

