



Children by Choice
Association Incorporated

Providing pro-choice
counselling, information and
education services on all
unplanned pregnancy
options – abortion, adoption
and parenting

Contact Details...

phone 07 3357 5570
or free call 1800 177 725
(within Queensland)

fax 07 3857 6246

postal address
PO Box 2005
Windsor QLD 4030

street address
237 Lutwyche Road
Windsor QLD
Australia

info@childrenbychoice.org.au

www.childrenbychoice.org.au

Medical Termination of Pregnancy: Clinic Procedure

This information sheet has been developed to provide clients with an outline of each stage that you will go through in having a medical termination of pregnancy at a private clinic. It should be noted that individual clinics may vary from the clinic procedure outlined in this information sheet, depending on the management and health care practices adopted by the medical director/s. The procedure outlined below is for a medical abortion using the mifepristone/misoprostol regime. Some clinics may use another medication regime that differs in efficacy and the time taken to complete the abortion.

What is a medical abortion?

A medical abortion occurs as the result of taking medications prescribed by a doctor at a dedicated clinic, to induce a miscarriage. A medical abortion occurs in several stages and requires several visits to the clinic (see below). There is also a risk of up to 5% that not all the pregnancy tissue will pass completely, so a woman choosing to have a medical termination will also need to be prepared to have a follow-up surgical termination if necessary. A medical termination is only available up to nine weeks of pregnancy.

Before arriving at the clinic

It is important to be sure about your decision prior to arriving at the clinic. Most clinics will ask you about your decision, but do not have trained counsellors or staff who can provide you with decision-making counseling on the day of the procedure.

A partner or support person may accompany you into the clinic and possibly attend the initial consultation with the nurse/counsellor (at your request) and will be contacted to return to pick you up when the procedure is complete. It is not possible for partners or support persons to accompany you throughout the medical examination and other medical procedures.

If you are still deciding between the medical or surgical terminations and want to keep your options open, you will need to fast from midnight the night before, have a shower and remove all make-up and jewellery prior to your appointment.

Administration and Registration

When attending a clinic the first stage in the process is registration. To register you are requested to fill out a

registration card with details such as name, address and contact phone number.

Payment

Payment for the cost of your abortion occurs before continuing through to the medical consultation. Expect to pay between \$300 and \$800 as prices vary from clinic to clinic. Some clinics provide concessions for Pension or Healthcare Card holders. It will also be necessary to have a Medicare card at time of payment. Part of the cost of the abortion is billed to Medicare. If a Medicare card or number is not available, full payment will be requested. Where full payment is made, Medicare card holders can claim a rebate for part of the cost by lodging a Medicare form.

Medical Abortion: Step One

A doctor will take your medical history and perform a clinical exam and lab tests. You will then be given additional information regarding the procedure and asked about your decision. If you are ready to continue, you will need to give your informed consent.

If you are eligible for medical abortion you will then take the first medication "mifepristone". Mifepristone is a prostaglandin, which blocks the hormone progesterone. Progesterone is necessary to sustain a healthy pregnancy. As a result of taking mifepristone the pregnancy will detach from the uterine wall. The cervix may also soften and open slightly. This process should not feel painful.

Medical Abortion: Step Two

At home, 24 to 48 hours after your clinic visit you will need to take the second medication, misoprostol, unless abortion has already occurred and has been confirmed by the doctor. These tablets may be taken orally or inserted into the vagina, depending on the treatment regimen.

After taking this medication, you will start to feel cramping that is similar to period pain but more severe and you will experience vaginal bleeding. This bleeding will be heavier than a normal period and will also contain blood clots. The blood clots may vary in size depending on how far along the pregnancy is, however they can be up to the size of a lemon. There is also the chance that you may see the grayish pregnancy tissue.

Most women will pass the pregnancy tissue within 24 hours after taking the misoprostol tablets.

You can take normal pain medication (except aspirin) to help

Our Vision ...

All women have the knowledge and power to take control of their sexual health and reproductive choices.

Support us ...

Make a donation today and ensure that we can continue to make a positive difference for women.

Membership of the association is open to all who agree with our aims.

Call us to explore opportunities to volunteer.

relieve the cramping. A medical abortion does not require an anesthetic or a period of fasting.

Medical Abortion: Step Three

Approximately 10-17 days after taking the second medication, you will need to return to the clinic for a check-up to confirm the all of the pregnancy tissue has passed completely. This check-up is essential to confirm that the abortion is complete.

If you are traveling a great distance to attend the clinic for a medical abortion, you will need to discuss your check-up appointment with the clinic doctor before proceeding with the abortion. It may or may not be possible to have a check-up with your local hospital or GP. You will need to follow the clinic's instructions about your check-up appointment, as only they can provide expert medical treatment and advice.

If there is an ongoing pregnancy, the clinician will discuss possible treatment options with you. These may include waiting and re-evaluating for complete abortion in a number of days or performing a surgical abortion.

Possible side effects of a medical abortion

Side effects, such as pain, cramping and vaginal bleeding, result from the abortion process itself, and are therefore expected with a medical abortion. Other side effects of the medications themselves may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, chills or fever.

Complications are rare, but may include excessive vaginal bleeding requiring transfusion (occurs in approximately 1 in 500 cases), incomplete abortion or ongoing pregnancy which requires a surgical abortion (see above).

Post Abortion Care

Following a medical abortion, you may bleed for up to two weeks. This bleeding will need to be managed using sanitary pads, not tampons.

Using the procedure outlined above, the rate of complications is minimal. Infections are possible and may be the result of an incomplete abortion. Infections occur in approximately 2% of cases.

To reduce the risk of infection it is recommended that you have nothing inside the vagina for 2 weeks and for a certain period refrain from:

- Sexual intercourse
- Insertion of tampons

Useful Resources...

For further information regarding medical abortion please see:

www.childrenbychoice.org.au
www.mariestopes.com.au

For more information regarding surgical abortion, please consult our surgical abortion information sheet, or the websites listed below:

www.childrenbychoice.org.au
www.mariestopes.com.au
www.gsds.com.au
www.ppadaysurgeries.com
www.optionsclinic.com.au

- Being submerged in water (swimming or taking baths)
- Excessive or strenuous exercise

The onset of an infection can often be detected through a rise in body temperature. Other indicators of an infection include: vaginal discharge; a foul smelling odour from the vagina; heavy blood loss or cramping in the abdominal region. If an infection is detected early, it can be treated with a course of antibiotics. If left untreated an infection can be quite dangerous. To reduce the risks of an infection it is advised that the post-operative instructions are followed carefully. If you have concerns seek medical assistance.

Before going to the clinic, check off the following items:

- Do you have your Medicare card?
- Do you have your Health Care Card (if applicable)?
- Do you have your blood group, haemoglobin level and hepatitis status, or have you checked whether this is done at the clinic?
- Do you have legal identification?
- Do you have payment for the abortion?
- Do you have contact details of your regular doctor?
- Have you brought with you any medication you are taking?
- Did you call the clinic the day before to confirm your appointment?