

What is medical abortion?

Medical abortion is when you take medications to end a pregnancy. It is a two-step process that involves taking one type of medication to end the pregnancy and a second type of medication to make the uterus contract to remove the pregnancy.

What medications will I need to take?

MS2-step

- Step 1 – mifepristone
- Step 2 – misoprostol.

Pain relief and anti-nausea medications are also recommended.

How will I need to take the medications?

Before you start, you will need to make sure you:

- are within 2 hours travel of a hospital with an emergency department for the next 14 days in case you have any complications
- have a responsible adult with you for the first 24 hours – this may be a family member, friend or partner
- are in a safe and comfortable place (e.g. at home).

WARNING: once Step 1 has been taken, the abortion has begun and Step 2 **MUST** be completed.

Step 1

- Take one (1) mifepristone 200mg tablet with a glass of water.

Step 2 – within 36-48 hours after taking Step 1

- Take your pain nausea medication to help with the cramps and pain
- Take four (4) misoprostol 200mcg tablets by putting them in your mouth between your checked and gum on both sides until they have dissolved.

What can I expect after taking the medication?

- Vaginal bleeding – this usually starts within 4 hours of Step 2; bleeding can range from light to heavy and is usually more than a typical period
- Cramping and pain – this can range from mild to severe
- Other side effects can usually last less than 24 hours and can include diarrhea, headache, nausea and vomiting, dizziness, flushing, shivering or chills
- You must seek medical help if you have a fever over 38°C.

What will I need to do after taking the medications?

It is essential that you attend your follow up appointment with the doctor to confirm that your abortion is complete and you have no complications.

You will need to have a blood test 7 days after you take Step 1. This blood test result will be check by our nurse. The nurse will contact you by phone or SMS to advise if you need to return urgently to see the doctor.

For the first 7 days after you take the medication you will need to avoid placing anything in your vagina to reduce the risk of infection. This includes:

- using sanitary pads instead of tampons or menstrual cups
- having showers instead of baths
- no swimming
- no sexual intercourse.

What are the risks and complications of medical abortion?

Bleeding

- Heavy blood loss requiring treatment can happen but is uncommon.

Infection

- Infections following a medical abortion need early treatment to avoid serious illness or issues with future attempts to become pregnant
- Infection requiring treatment in hospital is rare.

Incomplete abortion

- This may cause ongoing heavy bleeding and pain due to pregnancy tissue remaining in the uterus after the abortion
- This occurs in up to 4% of medical abortions.

Continuing pregnancy

- Further treatment with another dose of medications or a surgical procedure may be needed
- This occurs in less than 1% of medical abortions.

What do I do if I want more information before my doctor's appointment?

You can:

- Call Talkline on 1300 658 886 to speak with a nurse
- Make another appointment with the nurse at your local FPNSW clinic.

For more information

You can:

Family Planning NSW Talkline –

www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline or 1300 658 886

National Relay Service (for deaf people) –

13 36 77

TIS National's interpreting service –

131 450

Family Planning NSW client resource –

Pregnant? Working through your options

Family Planning NSW client factsheet on the law on abortion –

<https://www.fpnsw.org.au/factsheets/individuals/abortion/law-abortion-nsw>

Family planning NSW client resource on contraception –

<https://www.fpnsw.org.au/healthinformation/contraception/contraception-options>

Visit your nearest Family Planning NSW clinic –

www.fpnsw.org.au/clinics

Children by Choice –

www.childrenbychoice.org.au