

# Instructions and expectations after Medication Abortion

## STEP 1:

Take the **Mifepristone (Mifeprex) pill in the office** on the day of your appointment. This pill stops the pregnancy from continuing but most patients have no symptoms from taking this pill. You may have slight cramping or bleeding and that is okay. Still proceed through Step 2 even if you start bleeding. If you vomit up the pill within 30 minutes of taking it the pill may not work and you need to contact us immediately to repeat the dosing for an additional fee.

## STEP 2:

Put the **4 misoprostol pills in your cheeks between 24 to 48 hours after you take the mifepristone pill**, let them sit for 30 minutes then swallow. This medication helps to empty out your uterus.

If you need to take the pills outside of the above time window **you may opt instead to place all 4 misoprostol pills in the vagina between 6 and 72 hours after you take the mifepristone**. Use two fingers and place the pills as far up in the vagina as you can push them.

Take the pills between \_\_\_\_\_ on Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat and \_\_\_\_\_ on Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat/Sun/Mon  
Route chosen: \_\_\_\_\_ in cheeks or \_\_\_\_\_ vaginally

## How to take misoprostol:

To help prevent nausea and severe cramping we recommend that you take ibuprofen (Advil) 800mg and the nausea medication ondansetron (Zofran) 4 to 8mg thirty minutes prior to taking the 4 misoprostol tablets.

Have a light meal (not an empty stomach or a heavy meal) prior to taking the misoprostol. For the oral route take all 4 tablets and place them in between your gums and your cheeks, two on each side of your mouth. Let them sit and dissolve for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes you may swish and swallow any remaining pills. If you vomit after swallowing the misoprostol it should still work as expected as long as it stays in your cheeks for 30 minutes prior to swallowing it. For the vaginal route place all four pills as far up in the vagina as you can reach. You may lay down for 15-30 minutes after placing the pills in the vagina but generally the pills will not fall out and you can walk around. Bleeding can start as soon as 30 minutes after taking the medication but could take hours or even a few days to start. The bleeding and cramping can be intense and last between 2 and 24 hours. The bleeding and cramping can come and go over the first week.

If from a state where abortion is not currently legal and you are receiving NAF funding you must take the misoprostol pills while still in Colorado or in a state where abortion is still legal at the number of weeks you are in your pregnancy.

If you are **between 9 weeks and 11 weeks** in your pregnancy you will be given two bottles of misoprostol and instructed to REPEAT the dose of 4 misoprostol pills 4 hours after your first dose to increase success rates of the medication abortion. Take the second dose even if you have already started bleeding.

**Misoprostol side effects:** It is common to have nausea, vomiting, low grade fevers, chills, shakiness and diarrhea. These side effects do not last long. If your temperature is higher than 100.4 or fevers are lasting longer than 24 hours please call us. Antibiotics are not routinely given for medication abortion and infection is rare. Women's experience is highly variable so it's difficult to predict the nature of side effects for any woman.

**Cramping:** It is expected that you will have cramping with a medication abortion. The cramping is your uterus shrinking down in size and expelling the pregnancy and blood clots. If you are overly active it can increase your cramping. Scheduled dosing of Ibuprofen, Tylenol, and a heating pad are helpful tools to improve cramping. Medication dosing recommendations are on the next page. Massaging over your uterus (on your pelvis with deep circle pressure just above your pubic bone) can help cramping and help expel clots and stop bleeding. Cramping may continue for only a few hours or possible all week. Sometimes days later severe cramping will return as your uterus passes a blood clot and after it passes your cramping will improve. Call if cramping is severe and not improving with medications.

**Bleeding:** Initial bleeding in the hours to days after taking misoprostol is expected to be heavier than a period and it will be normal to pass some blood clots. There can also be rare times in very early pregnancy that women have little to no bleeding but the medication worked and their abortion is complete. Bleeding may start and stop over several days. It is normal to continue bleeding for 3-5 weeks but it should continue to lighten over that time.

You should use a pad for the first few days and then you can start using tampons. Please avoid sexual intercourse for at least 1 week after your abortion.

Please be aware if you are 9 to 11 weeks you may see the fetus when you pass the pregnancy. Your period will come 3-5 weeks after the medication abortion and may just seem like an increase in your bleeding if you had continue bleeding for that time. Please contact us if you do not get your period within 8 weeks of an abortion.

**Call on call provider if you have too much bleeding:**

- Soaking completely extra large pads every 30 minutes for 2 hours (changing 4 pads in 2 hours)
- Passing clots larger than the size of a large lemon

**Pregnancy symptoms:** Symptoms such as nausea, fatigue and breast tenderness should start improving within the first week after an abortion and be almost **gone within 2 weeks**. It is not normal for pregnancy symptoms to not improve at all after 2 weeks. Please contact us for a repeat ultrasound if you still have unchanged symptoms of pregnancy after 2 weeks.

**Confirming abortion is complete:** Medication abortion is successful 95-99% of the time. Generally women know their body and can usually identify if they passed the pregnancy. If you feel you had bleeding heavier than a period, passed clots and after 2 weeks all your pregnancy symptoms resolved you do not need a follow up ultrasound or visit. FDA guidelines in the mifepristone packet discuss a follow up visit but data shows now that if you feel well you can instead do a **home pregnancy test in 4-6 weeks after your medication abortion** to confirm success. You **MUST** have a negative pregnancy test. If the pregnancy test is positive, call us right away. In 10% of patients it can take until 6 weeks after an abortion for the pregnancy test to be negative. If you feel the medication did not work or still feel pregnant after 2 weeks you need to get a repeat ultrasound done right away. If you are near us we can schedule you back quickly to come see us or if you are in another state you need to get a repeat ultrasound done in your state. We can recommend specific clinics friendly to abortion care in your city. Any follow up care, such as ultrasounds, procedures, evaluations are included in what you paid already for the medication abortion so there is no additional cost to you to see us back. The only item that would not be covered would be if it was required to draw labs. If you feel well but have a strong desire for a follow up ultrasound we can accommodate seeing you back 2 weeks after your abortion.

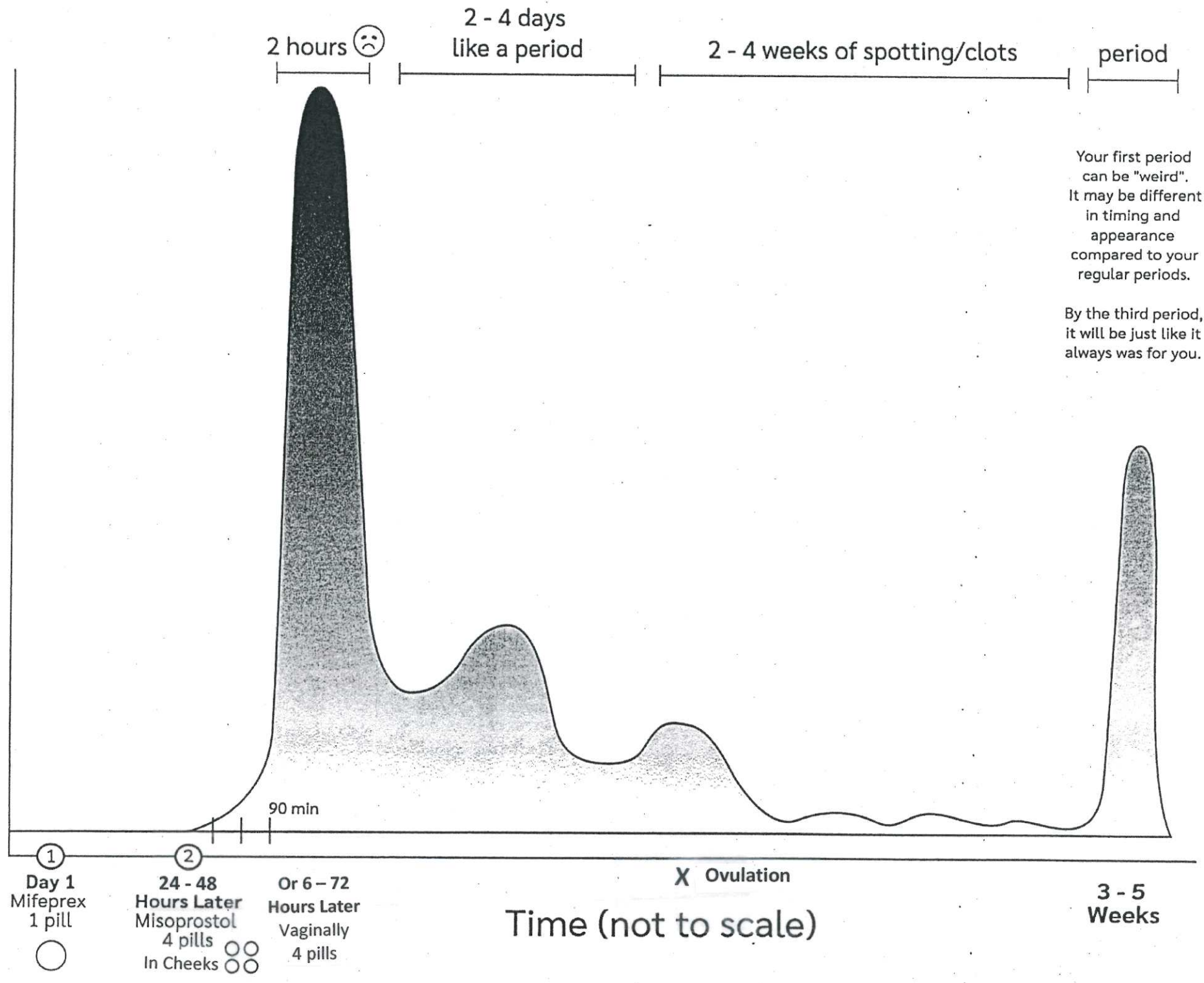
**Take a Home Pregnancy Test on or after \_\_\_\_\_** (but not more than 6 weeks after your abortion)

If you are still pregnant after a medication abortion you need to return to the clinic for a procedural abortion to complete your abortion. Mifepristone and misoprostol can cause serious birth defects if you remain pregnant. Your procedure to complete the abortion will be covered at no additional cost if you present within 6 weeks of your medication abortion.

**Do you need RhoGam?** **No** because you are less than 12 weeks in your pregnancy.

We follow WHO and NAF guidelines and only test women for blood Rh type (positive or negative) if they are 12 weeks or further along in pregnancy. There is not a risk for problems in future pregnancies if you are Rh negative and have an abortion less than 12 weeks in pregnancy. You should receive a RhoGam injection prior to leaving the clinic if you are at least 12 weeks in your pregnancy and Rh negative. If you refuse RhoGam when it is indicated there is a risk of fetal health problems in future pregnancies and you need to sign a refusal form. If you have a negative blood type and you are 12 weeks or more in your pregnancy you can risk creating antibodies that can cause severe complications for future pregnancies if you have an abortion without getting RhoGam. This only occurs if there is mixing between your blood and the blood inside the pregnancy.

# Bleeding and Cramping



# Emergency Contacts after your Medication Abortion

If you have any urgent questions or concerns outside of office hours please call Dr. \*\*\*\*\* cell phone \*\*\*\*\*.

If you do not get a response, call the on call person via the front desk at 303-991-7700. If the office is open please call the office first. Please *call* us rather than text. If calling a doctor's cell phone between the hours of 11pm and 7am if there is no answer please hang up and call back within 3 minutes to ring through the iphone privacy setting.

If you have a true emergency then call 911, however, most patients have *concerns*, not an emergency, so we prefer that you call us. We know your medical situation and we have much more experience than almost anyone else you are likely to get on the phone if you call elsewhere. You may be asked to come to our office for evaluation, even if it is in the middle of the night.

**Emergency room visits are rarely necessary and almost always very expensive. Our office cannot be responsible, medically or financially, for the care you receive from any source other than our office and our on-call providers.** If you do seek follow up care outside of our office please have them contact us immediately for details of your care.

## You need to call us if:

- You are soaking a maxi pad front to back and side to side, 2 per hour for 2 hours in a row (or a pad every 30 minutes for 2 hours)
- You are passing blood clots larger than the size of a lemon.
- You have a fever of over 100.4 degrees or more for 4 hours after misoprostol or fevers that start more than 24 hours after misoprostol.
- If you have signs of an allergic reaction to the medications
- You have severe cramping that is not relieved by medications or pain persisting for longer than the first few weeks.
- Foul odor discharge with pelvic pains can be signs of an infection.
- You feel short of breath, chest pain, or cough that was not present prior to the abortion.
- You have heavy bleeding or bruising from the vagina as above or at the IV site, or any bleeding at all from a place that we did not touch such as gums or nose, or if you have unexplained bruising on arms or legs.

## In cases of a true emergency call 911

In case of an emergency you should go to the closest hospital. If you have time to choose a hospital then consider which hospital is in network for your insurance. If you live near our clinic we recommend going to Swedish Hospital. Consider avoiding going to a catholic hospital if you have a choice in hospitals. Please notify us if you are going to an emergency room if you have time to call us. The provider can call the physician in the emergency room to give a report or we can fax over records if appropriate. This is usually very helpful for you to get appropriate care in the emergency room. If you live outside of Colorado in a state that abortion is not legal go to the closest hospital. Even if you had an abortion in a state that it is not legal there are no cases of people prosecuting the patient who had the abortion at this time and the physicians should care for you appropriately and you should not delay your care. It is your decision if you want to tell them that you had an abortion or not. Be advised the vaginal misoprostol pills may be visible on a speculum exam for up to 3 days after you insert them.

## Ongoing pregnancy symptoms:

It is imperative that we know that you are no longer pregnant. **All patients must do a pregnancy test at home 1 month after the abortion and call us right away if it is positive.** Persisting pregnancy is possible. Pregnancy symptoms should begin to diminish within days; for them to not diminish at all within 2-3 weeks is NOT normal and please call us. About **10% of patients take up to 6 weeks for the urine test to turn negative** after an abortion so when you call we will review your symptoms and if appropriate either see you in clinic or have you wait a week and repeat a urine pregnancy test. Your period returns in 3 to 6 weeks and will look slightly abnormal and often be irregular for the first 3 months.

# Routine Medications after your Medication Abortion

## Pain control:

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen are generally the most helpful for uterine cramping. You may get a prescription strength ibuprofen from our clinic or buy the lower dose over the counter at any grocery store or pharmacy.

Please take Ibuprofen 800mg 30 minutes prior to using misoprostol and then take it scheduled as described below for the first few days after a medication abortion.

Medication and Dosage	How to take it	Additional instructions
Advil/Motrin (ibuprofen) 200 mg over the counter or prescription of 800mg tablets	4 tablets (800mg) every 8 hours. OR if prescription 1 tablet of 800mg every 8 hours	You can take this even if you are taking other prescription pain medication. You can alternate them or take them together
Aleve (naproxen sodium) 220mg	2 tablets (440mg) every 8-12 hours	You can take this even if you are taking other prescription pain medication. <b>DO NOT COMBINE with ibuprofen.</b>
Tylenol (acetaminophen) 500mg	2 extra strength (1000mg) or 3 regular strength (975mg) every 6 hours	<u>Do not take this along with prescription pain medication</u> with acetaminophen. Do not exceed 4000mg tylenol in 24 hours. Okay to take at same time as ibuprofen

The provider may prescribe an opioid class of medication for pain but often this medication is not necessary:

### Prescription opioid pain medication:

- Vicodin (hydrocodone 5mg/acetaminophen 325mg) – take 1 to 2 tablet every 4-6 hours
- Percocet (oxycodone 5mg/acetaminophen 325mg) - 1 to 2 tablets every 6 hours

Take opioid pain medications with food since these medications can upset your stomach and cause nausea and constipation. Do not drive or drink alcohol while taking opioid pain medications. These medications are not intended for long term use. Store these medications carefully out of the reach of children. Some of these medications contain acetaminophen so should not be taken along with over-the-counter Tylenol. It is OK to take these with ibuprofen or Aleve. **Do not drive for at least 8 hours after taking prescription pain medication!**

## Nausea Medication:

- **Ondansetron** (Zofran) 4mg pill 1-2 every 6-8 hours as needed for **nausea**. We recommend that you take 2 of these 30 minutes prior to taking the misoprostol medication to help prevent severe nausea. These tablets dissolve under your tongue. The medication may cause a headache.

**Iron:** If you have concerns about anemia or feel more fatigue you can take iron to restore lost red blood cells. Most patients do not require extra iron. Iron comes in 2 forms: take either ferrous sulfate 324mg daily OR elemental iron 65 mg: 1 daily for 1 month (you can also take it every other day if desired). They may cause stomach upset. Likely to cause stool to appear black and can cause constipation. This medicine is over-the-counter and does not require a prescription.

## Do you need antibiotics?

- If you had an abortion by pill: **No**, antibiotics are not routinely necessary.

**Contraception (Birth Control):** You can get pregnant again 1-2 weeks after abortion. We recommend not having sexual intercourse for at least 1 week after your medication abortion. Consider choosing a birth control method today.

- o Most birth control should start within a week of the abortion. **You can start birth control pills, patches or vaginal rings the same day you take the misoprostol.** Don't wait for your next period because you ovulate around 14 days after your abortion so you can get pregnant BEFORE your first period. The pill doesn't protect you from pregnancy for the first week.
- o Depo Provera injections that can be done on the same day as your medication abortion if self pay or you may return any day after your first visit to use your insurance for Depo.
- o Nexplanon subdermal contraceptive can be inserted at a follow up visit with us any day after your medication abortion. If you go to another provider you usually will need to wait until a negative pregnancy test.
- o If you want an IUD (Mirena or Paragard) we recommend coming back to see us 2 weeks after your abortion. At that visit we can perform an ultrasound to confirm you are no longer pregnant and put in an IUD in the same visit. If you go to a provider outside of our clinic you usually will need to wait until a negative pregnancy test.