

Patient Information

Medical Termination of Pregnancy

Introduction

The aim of this leaflet is to explain what happens when you come into hospital for this procedure. We hope it will lessen any feelings of apprehension you may have.

Making the decision to have a termination can be difficult. We are here to help and support you. We have counsellors available for you to talk with if you so wish.

Medical termination is performed up to the ninth week of pregnancy. Beyond this date you may wish to consider surgical termination. You will be able to discuss these options with the doctor when you come to the Termination Clinic for your first visit.

The benefit of medical treatment is that it does not involve a general anaesthetic.

The treatment

The treatment is in two stages. First you will be given a tablet called Mifegyne, which contains a medicine called mifepristone. The second stage follows 2 days later when you will be given a vaginal tablet, called a pessary, containing 1mg of a medicine called gemeprost.

Mifegyne acts by blocking the effects of progesterone, a hormone which is needed for the pregnancy to continue. Gemeprost is a different type of hormone (a prostaglandin) which will soften the cervix and help to expel the pregnancy. The two hormones must be used one after the other to give the best possible chance for the treatment to work.

Will the treatment suit me?

Most women can have this treatment although there are some exceptions. You should not have the treatment if:

- You are not pregnant.
- You have an ectopic pregnancy (where the pregnancy is in the fallopian tube rather than in the womb).
- The first day of your last period was more than 63 days ago.
- You have ever had a bad reaction or are allergic to mifepristone.
- You suffer from severe asthma that is not controlled by medication.
- You have liver or kidney disease.
- You are breast feeding.

Some other health problems may also make this treatment unsuitable. These include:

- Heart complaints or high blood pressure.
- Chronic bronchitis or diabetes.
- High blood cholesterol levels.
- Long term steroid therapy.
- Blood clotting disorders.
- Heavy smoking with age over 35 years.

At your first consultation, the doctor will discuss these issues with you to ensure that the treatment is suitable for you.

Some other medicines may interfere with the treatment and should not be used until after the procedure is completed. These include pain relief tablets such as aspirin, ibuprofen and mefenamic acid. If you are taking any medications, you must tell the doctor.

How is the treatment given?

After your first consultation with the doctor, you will be given a date to return for the treatment. At this visit the nurse will give you the mifegyne tablet, which you swallow with some water. You will be able to leave after this once we are sure you will not be sick. If you are sick within 2 hours, please notify the Clinic.

Two days later, you will return to the hospital and be admitted to Wynard Ward. Here the nurse will give you the vaginal pessary of gemeprost. You will need to bring with you loose, comfortable clothes, change of underwear, slippers and your wash bag. You may have someone with you if you wish. We recommend that someone does come to collect you from the ward rather than drive yourself home.

What will happen to me?

Once you have taken the mifegyne tablet, we strongly recommend that you continue with the termination as there is a risk of fetal abnormality.

After taking the mifegyne tablet you may experience some nausea or get a headache. Vaginal bleeding *may* start after 12 hours with some cramping. We recommend you use sanitary pads rather than tampons if you do bleed.

After the vaginal pessary, you will experience pain and cramping which may be quite severe. You will be able to have pain relief for this if you need it. You will have vaginal bleeding which again may be heavy and you may pass clots. The pregnancy should be passed within 6 to 8 hours. You will be required to use a bed pan and your pads will be collected by the nurses. This will enable the nurses to check that you have expelled the products of conception.

When the ward staff are satisfied that you have passed the products of conception, you will be allowed to go home. You may continue to bleed for a further 2 weeks and during this time you may pass blood clots. Do not be alarmed, this is quite normal.

It is advisable to avoid sexual intercourse and to use pads rather than tampons until the bleeding stops.

Side effects of the treatment

Complications are rare with this treatment, but all procedures do carry some degree of risk.

There is a small chance that the procedure fails. If this should happen, the doctor will follow you up and you may need an operation to remove the pregnancy.

After taking the mifegyne tablet, in rare cases some women have experienced headache, skin rashes or swelling of the face.

Bleeding and cramps are normal effects of the treatment. However, excessive bleeding may result in the need for surgery or blood transfusion.

Some women have diarrhoea, sickness, hot flushes, headache and dizziness after being given the pessary. Rarely there may be pain in the chest. If you think you are reacting badly to the medicines, please talk to the nurse on the ward immediately.

Smoking and drinking

You should not drink alcohol or smoke once you have started the treatment. This means from taking the mifegyne tablet to at least two days after you have been given the prostaglandin pessary.

Follow-up visit

It is important that you have follow-up care arranged with the Termination Clinic two weeks after the procedure. We will check that the termination has been complete, that the bleeding is minimal and that you are well.

Periods / contraception

Your next period should happen within the next four to six weeks. It is possible to become pregnant straight away after the procedure. It is therefore important that you decide on contraception and start using it immediately.

Contact numbers

- Counsellors 01392 406678
- Wynard Ward..... 01392 406512
- Clinic 2 Co-ordinator..... 01392 406503
- British Pregnancy Advisory Service..... 01564 793225
- Brook Advisory Centre..... 0117 929 0090
- Contraception Service 01392 284957

Here to help

Our **Health Information Centre (HIC)** nursing and health promotion team can provide advice and information on a wide range of health-related topics.

We also offer:

- Services for people with disabilities.
- Information in large print, Braille and Easy Read formats.
- Information on audio tape and CD-ROM.
- A service to provide information in a language other than English.

The **HIC** can be contacted on: **01392 402071**

For RD&E services log on to: **www.rdehospital.nhs.uk**

Smoking is not allowed on any of the RD&E sites. Patients, visitors and staff cannot smoke in or around any buildings, car parks or courtyard gardens.

For information on how to stop smoking, see your GP before coming into hospital or phone the **Stop Smoking Service** on **0845 111 1142**. This is a local service run by Devon Primary Care Trust.

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The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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