

Information about The Abortion Pill

Planned Parenthood of Waco Family Planning & Surgical Services (License #008245)

Cost of The Abortion Pill (Medication Abortion)

The cost of the Abortion Pill includes:

Pregnancy test	Mifepristone and Misoprostol (abortion medications)
Options education	Antibiotic
Pelvic exam	1 pack of birth control pills
Ultrasound	Prescriptions for birth control and Plan B “the morning after pill”
Rhogam (if indicated)	Follow-up visit and ultrasound
Rh Type and hemoglobin testing	
Medications for discomfort and nausea	

Please refer to our website for pricing information.

Before of the Abortion

When you check in on the day of the abortion, you will be asked to complete a medical history form and other paperwork. To save time, you can print and fill out the forms ahead of time by accessing the Patient Forms section of our website.

You will spend time with a staff member who will explain how the Abortion Pill works, answer any questions you may have, and get your written consent. A number of tests will be done, including a pregnancy test (if you haven't already had one) and a blood test to check your Rh type and to make sure that you are not anemic.

Next a nurse will go over your medical history and a pelvic exam and vaginal ultrasound will be done.

Ultrasound is a procedure that helps the clinician to see the pregnancy in order to tell the age of the embryo or fetus and to look at your uterus. This is done with an instrument that sends sound waves through the tissues. This ultrasound is being done only to determine the age of the embryo or fetus and its location and not to detect abnormalities of the pregnancy, fetus, or reproductive tract. If more studies are needed, you will be referred to an appropriate provider. There are limitations to all imaging techniques, and none is 100% accurate or reliable.

The final decision about the abortion will depend on your medical history, your physical examination, the results of your laboratory tests, the ultrasound, and your wishes.

What is the Abortion Pill?

The abortion pill is a medicine that ends an early pregnancy. In general, it can be used up to 63 days after the first day of a woman's last period.

The name for "the abortion pill" is **mifepristone**. It was called RU-486 when it was being developed.

How Effective is the Abortion Pill?

You can feel confident in knowing that medication abortion with the abortion pill is very effective. It works about 97 out of every 100 times. You'll follow up at our health center after your abortion so you can be sure that it worked and that you are well.

Some of the medicines used in medication abortion may cause serious birth defects if the pregnancy continues. So, in the unlikely case that it doesn't work, you will need to have an in-clinic (surgical) abortion to end the pregnancy.

What Happens During Medication Abortion?

It's common for women to be nervous about having a medication abortion — or any other medical procedure. But many of us feel better if we know what to expect. When you come in for your appointment, our staff will discuss the Abortion Pill with you and answer your questions. Here's a general idea of how it works and what to expect.

Medication abortion is a process that begins immediately after taking the abortion pill.

There are three steps:

STEP ONE — THE ABORTION PILL

You will be given one 200 mg tablet of mifepristone at the health center. You will also be given instructions for the next few days, pain medication (usually acetaminophen and ibuprofen), an antibiotic, and phenergan for nausea.

The abortion pill works by blocking the hormone progesterone. Without progesterone, the lining of the uterus breaks down, and pregnancy cannot continue.

STEP TWO — MISOPROSTOL

Day 2 or 3 (24-48 hours later): You will insert 4 Misoprostol pills between your gum and cheek. Misoprostol causes the uterus to empty; you will have cramps and bleed heavily. Some women may begin bleeding before taking the second medicine. But for most, the bleeding and cramping begin after taking it. It usually lasts a few hours. You may see large blood clots or tissue at the time of the abortion.

If, after 48 hours of the first dose of Misoprostol, you haven't started bleeding, you will need to call the nurse. She may recommend that you take a second dose but not until she hears from you. If you don't start bleeding after a second dose, then a surgical abortion will be scheduled.

More than half of women abort within four or five hours after taking the second medicine. For others, it takes longer. But most women abort within a few days.

It's normal to have some bleeding or spotting for up to four weeks after the abortion. We recommend using pads rather than tampons. Using pads makes it easier to keep track of your bleeding.

How Does Medication Abortion Feel?

For most women, medication abortion is like an early miscarriage. It is normal for you to have bleeding and cramping. You might also

- feel dizzy
- feel strong cramps
- feel nauseous or vomit
- have diarrhea
- feel temporary abdominal pain
- have temporary mild fever or chills
- Acetaminophen (like Tylenol) or ibuprofen (like Advil) can reduce most of these symptoms. Do not take aspirin.

You may feel more at ease if you have a trusted loved one with you during the abortion.

STEP THREE — FOLLOW-UP

You will need to return to our health center for a follow-up appointment within two weeks. At this appointment, we will do an ultrasound to confirm that the abortion is complete and that you are well.

In the unlikely event that the abortion did not occur but the pregnancy is not viable, you have the option of waiting until day 42 of the process for the abortion to occur. Misoprostol may be repeated as outlined above in Step 2. If the pregnancy is still viable, the chance of a repeated medication abortion being successful is remote and a surgical abortion should be done.

How Safe is the Abortion Pill?

Most women can have a medication abortion safely. But all medical procedures have some risks, so safety is a concern.

Rare, but possible risks include:

- an allergic reaction to either of the pills
- incomplete abortion — part of the pregnancy is left inside the uterus
- infection
- undetected ectopic pregnancy — a fertilized egg implanted outside the uterus
- very heavy bleeding

Most often, these complications are simple to treat with medicine or other treatments.

In extremely rare cases, very serious complications may be fatal. The risk of death from medication abortion is much less than from a full-term pregnancy or childbirth.

Serious complications may have warning signs. Call our health center or your doctor right away if at any time you have

- heavy bleeding from your vagina and are soaking through more than two maxi pads an hour, for two hours or more in a row
- clots for two hours or more that are larger than a lemon

- abdominal pain or discomfort that is not helped by medication, rest, a hot water bottle, or a heating pad
- a fever of 100.4°F or higher that lasts for more than four hours
- vomiting for more than four to six hours and you are not able to keep anything down
- an unpleasant smelling discharge from your vagina
- signs that you are still pregnant

You should start to feel better each day after the abortion. Feeling sick — having abdominal discomfort, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, or weakness — more than 24 hours after taking misoprostol could be a sign of serious infection. **Contact us right away if you have any of these symptoms. Do not wait until your scheduled follow-up.**

You may need to return to our health center for further care. Rarely, women need vacuum aspiration (in-clinic/surgical abortion) or hospitalization. Take your medication guide with you if you need to visit an emergency room, a hospital, or a health care provider.

The abortion pill may not be right for all women. You shouldn't use the abortion pill if you

- are more than 63 days — nine weeks — pregnant
- are not willing to have an aspiration abortion in the unlikely case that the medicines do not end your pregnancy
- cannot come to follow-up appointments
- do not have access to a telephone, transportation, and backup medical care
- have a known or suspected molar pregnancy — one in which the placenta develops abnormally
- have severe adrenal gland, heart, kidney, or liver problems
- take any medicine that should not be combined with the medications used in medication abortion — mifepristone or misoprostol
- take anti-clotting medication or have a blood-clotting disorder
- currently have an IUD. You will need to have it removed before having a medication abortion.

Talk with your health care provider to find out if medication abortion is likely to be safe for you. If medication abortion isn't right for you, don't worry. An in-clinic abortion is likely to be safe for you.

Breastfeeding During Medication Abortion

A little bit of misoprostol will be present in breast milk after you take it. If you are breastfeeding, the misoprostol may cause your infant to have diarrhea. Let your health care provider know if you are breastfeeding so you can work out the best plan together.

Why Do Women Choose the Abortion Pill?

- It can be done early — women can begin treatment as soon as they know they are pregnant.
- It's private — women may complete the process of abortion at home.
- There's usually no anesthesia.

- Many women feel it's more "natural" — they feel it is more like miscarriage.
- Women may feel more in control — many feel it is less invasive.

Nearly all women who have used the abortion pill would recommend the method to a friend.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER TAKING THE ABORTION PILL?

Many of us feel shy about asking questions, but your provider is there to help you. Feel free to get answers to all of your questions. You might even find it helpful to make a list before you see your health care provider so you remember the questions you want to ask.

YOUR FEELINGS AFTER MEDICATION ABORTION

You may have a wide range of feelings after an abortion. Most women ultimately feel relief. Some women feel anger, regret, guilt, or sadness for a little while. Sudden shifts in hormones may make these feelings stronger.

Serious, long-term emotional problems after abortion are about as uncommon as they are after giving birth. You may be more likely to have emotional problems after abortion for certain reasons. Some of these reasons are

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- having a history of emotional problems before your abortion
 - having important people in your life who aren't supportive of your decision to have an abortion
 - having to terminate a wanted pregnancy because your health or the health of your fetus is in danger
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If you want to talk with someone after an abortion, our staff can refer you to a licensed counselor or to nonjudgmental support groups.

GETTING YOUR PERIOD AFTER MEDICATION ABORTION

Abortion begins a new menstrual cycle. You should have a regular period in 4 to 8 weeks.

SEX AND BIRTH CONTROL AFTER MEDICATION ABORTION

Many health care providers recommend that you not have vaginal intercourse or insert anything except a tampon into your vagina for one week after the abortion.

You can get pregnant **very soon** after an abortion. So, birth control is an important and common concern for many women after abortion. If you know about the different methods and have made a choice, we can provide you with that method at the time of your abortion or at your follow-up appointment. If you need more information about birth control, we will provide this at your appointment. Any time you have questions or concerns about birth control or pregnancy, you are encouraged to call the health center. Staff are available to talk with you.

If you were given birth control pills, you should start them the first Sunday following the abortion. Spotting and breakthrough bleeding are very common during the first package of birth control pills used after pregnancy. It should go away by the second cycle, as the lining of the uterus repairs itself.

Caring for Yourself After the Abortion

This information describes what usually occurs after an abortion to help you decide whether your experiences are normal or if you need additional medical attention. Keep this information until your next period and refer to it if you have questions.

If you are unsure whether the symptoms you are having are normal or if you are having a problem, please call the health center where you had the abortion.

- **Cramping is expected** — It will be most severe after you take the misoprostol. Milder cramps may last a day or two after that.
- **Bleeding is expected** — It will be heaviest soon after taking the misoprostol. You may bleed or spot for three to four weeks after the abortion. You can expect your next period in four to eight weeks.
- **Fever** — Having a temperature of 99-100°F is okay. It should only last a short time.
- **Other** — It is common to have diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, back pain, and tiredness. They usually lighten up three days later. They usually stop within two weeks.

SUCCESSFUL COPING AFTER AN ABORTION

Women experience a variety of emotions when they are pregnant and when they have an abortion. Feelings of relief, elation, sadness, depression, and/or a sense of loss are common. Some of these feelings do not last very long. It may be helpful to talk with someone close to you, or you may want to return to the health center and talk further with a Planned Parenthood staff member. In addition, your partner or someone else close to you may have feelings or concerns they would like to discuss. Staff is available during health center hours for them, as well.

The decision whether or not to have an abortion is a very personal matter. Any woman considering having an abortion needs to feel that an abortion is the best choice for her at the time, even if the decision is a very difficult one.

There is no “right” way to feel after an abortion. There may be a number of feelings, both positive and troublesome, and it is important to know that your feelings are valid, no matter what they are. Planned Parenthood encourages discussion of these feelings before and after the abortion.

There is a false belief that women sink into depression, guilt, and grief after an abortion. According to research, the majority of women who have abortions have no regrets and would make the same choice again in similar circumstances. 91% report a sense of relief after the abortion. It can present an opportunity to reconsider attitudes and relationships. Many are happy to have a fresh start in life and be back to normal.

For some women, there is a mixture of both positive and negative feelings. Relief, mixed with sadness, guilt, or anger is not unusual. Sometimes hormonal changes after an abortion can result in a period of “the blues.” Most women cope well and move on in a short period of time.

Occasionally, some women do have very negative feelings after an abortion. If you should be one of these women, do not think there is something wrong with you. Your feelings are valid and need to be expressed. Sharing feelings with your partner, a close friend, or a counselor may help.

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Serious emotional problems (such as severe depression or psychosis) after an abortion appear to occur less frequently than after childbirth. For fewer than 5% of women, abortion will bring serious sadness, guilt, anger, or regret. These feelings are troublesome because many people do not know how to cope in positive ways when experiencing these feelings.

Before you have an abortion, you need to look at your feelings. Pretending they are not there or that they will go away on their own can be a mistake.

There are some situations that indicate emotional problems after an abortion:

- Women who have had a psychiatric illness in the past have a higher chance of serious emotional problems after the abortion, especially if they quit taking their medications for their illness during the pregnancy. It is important for anyone with a psychiatric illness to see their psychiatrist or therapist before and after an abortion.
- Extreme difficulty making up one's mind about choosing abortion may mean problems afterward. Ambivalence is a normal part of the process, but when it becomes so painful that a clear choice cannot be made, it may indicate later problems.
- Women who are persuaded by partners, parents, or others to have an abortion against their own wishes experience greater feelings of guilt and regret. If you have an abortion to please someone else, it is the wrong reason. You may blame them later and regret the decision. It must be your own choice.

Planned Parenthood staff are available to help you successfully cope with feelings after an abortion. We can help you find a therapist or a member of the clergy who can help you with ongoing concerns or problems.