

Planned Parenthood Association of Utah
Client Information for Informed Consent- Using the Abortion Pill

What is the abortion pill and how do I take it? “Abortion pill” is a popular name for a medicine called mifepristone. It is the first pill you will take to end your pregnancy and starts the abortion process. Pregnancy needs a hormone called progesterone to grow normally. Mifepristone blocks the body’s own progesterone, causing the pregnancy to end.

After you take the abortion pill, you need to take a second medicine called misoprostol. It opens the cervix and makes the uterus contract. This empties the uterus and completes the process. The whole process is called medication abortion.

There are a few different ways to take these medicines. There is the way approved by the FDA. Other ways to take the medicines have been studied. You might take a different amount of medicine. When you take the medicine might be different. These other ways are also safe and are usually more effective than the FDA way. We will give you instructions how to take your pills. It is important to follow these instructions.

After you take the abortion pill and misoprostol, you must make sure the medicines worked and that you’re no longer pregnant. This can be done by having an ultrasound at the clinic or by a blood test at a lab.

Before you have an abortion, you need to know the most common benefits, risks, side effects, emotional reactions, and other choices you have. We are happy to answer any questions you have.

What are the benefits of the abortion pill? Using the abortion pill together with misoprostol is safe and effective. At Planned Parenthood, it works about 98 out of 100 times. Women can use it in the first 10 weeks (70 days) of pregnancy.

What are the side effects of the abortion pill? Side effects usually do not last long. They usually need little or no treatment.

- **Cramping is expected** — It will be the worst after you take the misoprostol. Milder cramps may last a day or 2 after that.
- **Bleeding is expected** — It will be heaviest soon after taking the misoprostol. You may bleed or spot for 4 to 6 weeks after the abortion.
- **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 3 days later. They usually stop within 2 weeks.

Can I breastfeed if I take the abortion pill? Both misoprostol and mifepristone can pass into your breast milk in small amounts after you take it. These amounts shouldn’t cause any problems for you or your baby. Tell your doctor or nurse if you’re breastfeeding so you can work out the best plan together.

What feelings do women have after abortion? Having a wide range of feelings is normal. Most women feel relieved and do not regret their decision. Others may feel sad, guilty, or regret after an abortion, just as they may after having a baby. If your mood keeps you from doing the things you usually do each day, call us. We can help or send you to someone who can.

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Besides taking the abortion pill, what other choices do I have? If you are pregnant, you have three options to think about — abortion, adoption, and parenting. If you choose abortion, you can have it done in the clinic, in a hospital or by another doctor or nurse, now or later in your pregnancy. But, there are more risks the longer you wait to have an abortion. We can talk about any of these options with you, and help you with whatever you decide to do.

What are the risks of the abortion pill? Using the abortion pill is very safe. But, there are risks with any medical procedure. Your risk may be higher if you are not healthy. Risks linked with the abortion pill are (continued)

- **The pregnancy doesn't end** — Sometimes the medicines do not end the pregnancy. Since they may cause serious birth defects, you will need to take additional medicines or have an abortion in a clinic or a hospital if the pregnancy continues.
- **Incomplete abortion** — This means some of the pregnancy tissue may be left inside the uterus (womb). This may lead to heavy bleeding, infection, or both. If this happens, you may need an abortion in a clinic or a hospital. Other tests or treatments may be needed.
- **Blood clots in the uterus** — Clots may cause cramping and belly pain. You may need a procedure if that happens.
- **Bleeding too much or too long** — This may require treatment with medicine, a suction procedure, or a blood transfusion.
- **Infection of the uterus** — Most infections can be found and treated with medicines. But, there is a small chance that you may need a suction procedure. You may have to go to the hospital, or even have surgery to treat the infection.
- **Allergic reaction** — Some women are allergic to the medicines that are used.
- **Death** — Death from medication abortion is very rare. The risk of death from a full-term pregnancy and childbirth is much greater.

What are the warning signs of a problem? Call us right away if you have

- **Belly pain** — This includes feeling sick, being weak, having nausea or diarrhea, or throwing up. It should not last longer than 24 hours after you take the second medicine. Call us right away if they do. Any one of them may be a sign of a serious infection. Or it could be another problem, like ectopic pregnancy. (That is a pregnancy that grows outside the womb.)
- **Heavy Bleeding** — Call us right away if you soak through two thick, full-size sanitary pads every hour for two hours in a row. Or call us if you think your bleeding is too heavy. One out of every 100 women will bleed so much that they need a surgical procedure to stop it.
- **Fever** — Call us right away if you have a fever of 100.4°F or more if it lasts for 4 hours and it happens during the few days after you take the second pills. Fever that high can be a sign of serious infection. Or it could be another problem, like ectopic pregnancy.

What else do I need to know? We will give you instructions on how to take care of yourself during the abortion. We will give you a time to return to Planned Parenthood for a follow-up visit.

No promise can be made about the outcome of your abortion. In the unlikely event that you need emergency medical care that cannot be provided at Planned Parenthood, you will be responsible for paying for it. This is the case even if Planned Parenthood sends you to another doctor or hospital because of a problem.