



Aftercare information

It is important that you read this information carefully and take it home with you for reference.

If you are worried about anything at all, please call us day or night for advice. If you need further treatment it will be free of charge.

Marie Stopes International

24 hour Aftercare Line

0845 122 1441

Overseas callers

00 44 845 122 1441

Irish women can also get help and advice from
Marie Stopes Reproductive Choices in Dublin

(01) 830 0630 (24 hours / 7 days)

When you go home...

- We advise you not to have a bath or shower for 24 hours after an abortion to avoid the risk of infection and because after an anaesthetic there is a chance you might feel a bit faint
- Do **NOT** use tampons until your next period
- Do **NOT** have intercourse (or oral sex) for two weeks
- Avoid any strenuous activity for at least two weeks, including sports or heavy physical work

Your next period: Your next period should begin after four to six weeks.

- **Contraception:** You can become pregnant again straight away – so use contraception every time you have sex and remember condoms are the only method that can help protect you against sexually transmitted infections. Follow the advice you have been given if you are taking the contraceptive pill.
- **Breast discomfort:** May not stop immediately. If you were over 12 weeks pregnant your breasts may still get larger and leak a little. A mild analgesia (like paracetamol) and wearing a supportive bra may help. Do not squeeze or attempt to express milk from your breasts as this will only prolong the symptoms. If they are still sore after two weeks please call us or return for a check.

- **Pregnancy tests:** Can still be positive for up to three weeks after an abortion. It is best not to do a test before this but call us if you are worried. If the pregnancy test is positive after three weeks please ring the post treatment line for advice as soon as possible, as this may mean that the treatment has been unsuccessful and you are still pregnant.
- **“Morning” sickness:** Nausea should stop immediately after treatment. If this continues for a week after treatment please call us for advice.

Bleeding:

Bleeding after an abortion is different for everyone. The following is a guide.

- **If you have had a surgical abortion** you may not bleed for up to five days after treatment – this is normal. Bleeding can last for between two to seven days and may be heavy, initially containing clots and you will probably have some cramps. This usually settles within a couple of days – bleeding after this will be similar to a period. Some women experience intermittent bleeding and spotting for up to six weeks, but this should settle after the first period. If you feel that bleeding is abnormally heavy or prolonged, or are at all worried, call us for advice.

- **If you have had a medical abortion** (with tablets), after taking the tablets on the second visit you will experience heavy bleeding with clots and cramps. Bleeding will continue for a further couple of days and will then become similar to a period and may last for up to about two weeks. You might also have intermittent bleeding and spotting for up to six weeks. If you feel the bleeding is abnormally heavy or unusual then call us for advice.

Travel after an abortion: If you are intending to travel a long distance, especially by air, be prepared that you may have some pain and bleeding during this time. Discuss this with the Marie Stopes team before you embark on travel.

Pain

- Whatever treatment you have had you may experience some cramps for a few days. Ibuprofen is the most effective painkiller. If this does not help and the pain persists for more than a day or so or becomes severe, call us for advice.

Medical abortion (abortion pill)

- Side effects of this medication may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, shivering – the onset of this can be fairly soon following taking the medication, so you need to plan your journey home. We recommend that you are accompanied and driven home.

Possible complications

- **Incomplete abortion:** Usually, any tiny fragment of tissue left in the uterus will pass naturally during bleeding. However, in some cases, this does not happen and you may experience heavier bleeding or cramps. Although this is rare and affects less than one in a hundred of our clients, further or repeat treatment may be needed to resolve the problem.
- **Infection:** If abdominal pain does not subside after a few days or if it returns or becomes more severe, you may have an infection – particularly if you also have a raised temperature, flu-like symptoms and/or a smelly vaginal discharge.

Possible complications (continued)

- **Continuing pregnancy:** This is rare, affecting less than 2 in 200 women (0.5%) following surgical abortion and 2-3 women in 100 (2-3%) following medical abortion. If pregnancy symptoms such as nausea, sickness or breast tenderness persist after two weeks, this may indicate that your treatment has not been successful and you are still pregnant.

We would not advise performing a pregnancy test until after three weeks as it will take that time for pregnancy hormones to subside, so the result may not be reliable. Call us for advice if you have any concerns and, if needed, we will arrange for a repeat treatment.

Warning signs

If you have any of these signs, please call for advice:

- Bleeding that you consider heavy or unusual which has lasted continually for more than two days
- Frequent passing of blood clots
- Persistent pain and cramps continuing for more than two days
- Severe pain or cramps
- Smelly vaginal discharge
- Raised temperature
- Sickness or breast soreness that has continued for two weeks following treatment
- Absence of a normal period after six weeks following treatment

Ectopic pregnancy

If you are in the early stages of pregnancy, that is under ten weeks, it is important that you read the leaflet 'Ectopic Pregnancy' given to you on your admission.

Your chlamydia test

If you had a chlamydia test but have not received the result yet, call our test results line on **0845 120 3641**. If you have a positive test you will need some antibiotics and your partner will also need to take a test too. If you have already been given antibiotics make sure you take all the tablets you were given as directed.

Call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 for more information about your nearest GUM (Genito Urinary Medicine) clinic, or call Marie Stopes International on 0845 300 0460.

Future contraception

If you have not already decided on your contraception, here are some of the options to think about.

You can visit your own GP. A local family planning clinic (call the FPA on **0845 310 1334** for details) or come back to a Marie Stopes centre – for more information call **0845 300 8090**.

Methods to consider

- Pill
- Coil (IUD)
- Injection
- Implants
- Cap (Diaphragm)
- Condoms
- Sterilisation: If you would like more information about Marie Stopes sterilisation services call **0845 300 8090**

Post abortion counselling

Although most women feel relieved following an abortion, if you find you have unexpected reactions and unresolved emotions then be reassured that this is quite normal. Specialist one-to-one counselling can help you work through these issues and move forward. If you would like to talk to a counsellor, we can arrange a session as part of our service.

You may feel this is all you need but further sessions can be arranged as a private arrangement with the counsellor, at a small cost. Call **0845 300 8090** for an appointment.

Other services we provide:

- Well Woman and Well Man screening
- Cervical smear tests
- Gynaecological checks
- Chlamydia testing for men and women
- Vasectomy and female sterilisation

Call for more information on 0845 300 8090.

Anti-D given

Name

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Centre No

.....

Blood Group

.....

Anti-D given:

Date

.....

Dose

.....

Contraception given

**Method
given**

**date
given**

**check
due**

Pills type _____

Supply given _____ packet(s)

IUD type _____

Depo Provera _____

Implant _____

