



Medical abortion

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Read this document carefully and keep it until you have made your final decision. Feel free to ask questions or share your concerns at any time. Our staff would be pleased to speak to you.



Appointment

Date: _____

Time: _____

If you can't make it to your appointment, please call us as soon as possible.

You have decided to interrupt your pregnancy

Rest assured that your decision will be respected by the entire clinic staff and that your privacy will be protected. Our role is to offer you a safe, professional service: Your well-being is our main concern.

Pre-procedure meeting

1. We will ask you to fill out a medical questionnaire.
2. You will then meet with a nurse, who will complete your medical file and give you information about the abortion. Do not hesitate to ask the nurse for more explanations.
You can also ask to meet with a psychosocial worker.
3. An ultrasound will be done to determine the age of the pregnancy.
4. An STBBI (sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections) screening test will also be done (for chlamydia and gonorrhea).
If the result is positive, the nurse will contact you to arrange for treatment.
5. A blood test could be done to determine your blood type.
If you are Rh-negative, you may be given anti-D immunoglobulin (WinRho) to prevent complications during a future pregnancy.

At the end of the meeting, the date and time of the procedure will be scheduled. **Rest assured that you can change your mind at any time.**

For Québec residents, abortion is covered by the RAMQ. However, women who are not covered (e.g., expired RAMQ card) will have to pay for the procedure.

Rh-negative mother



Sometimes, a woman who is Rh-negative may carry a fetus that is Rh-positive. If fetal blood crosses the placenta, the mother's immune system could produce antibodies in response (a process known as alloimmunization).

In future pregnancies, if the fetus is Rh-positive, these antibodies could be reactivated and attack the fetus's red blood cells, leading to serious complications.

Anti-D immunoglobulin (WinRho)

Depending on the age of your pregnancy (8 to 12 weeks or more), you may be offered an injection of anti-D immunoglobulin (WinRho).

This treatment helps neutralize the proteins on the surface of Rh-positive red blood cells, preventing the production of antibodies.

Anti-D immunoglobulin is a safe, human-derived blood product that undergoes extensive purification to eliminate all traces of known viruses (such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV).

As with all blood products, the risk of contracting an infection is very low. In very rare cases, an allergic reaction may occur, but health professionals present during the injection are prepared to respond if necessary.

Information

Medical abortion

A medical abortion is an alternative to a surgical abortion. The two-drug combination has been used for more than 25 years, in many countries. It has been approved for use and available in Canada since 2017.

A medical abortion is more than 95% effective if the procedure is begun before 49 days of pregnancy. Its overall efficacy, up to 77 days of pregnancy, is estimated at 87-98%.

How the medication works

Mifepristone

Mifepristone is an anti-hormone that acts by blocking the effects of progesterone (called the pregnancy hormone). This interrupts the pregnancy. Several studies have demonstrated the efficacy and safety of mifepristone when used to perform medical abortions. The dose used is 200 mg, in the form of 1 oral tablet (by mouth). No harmful side effects have been reported with its use.

Misoprostol

Misoprostol is used to prepare the cervix for surgical abortion and in different gynecological-obstetric procedures. It acts on the uterine muscle and the cervix. It causes the uterus to contract and the cervix to dilate, resulting in expulsion of the contents of the uterus.

Misoprostol can cause major birth defects in the fetus in the case of a failed abortion (continuation of the pregnancy).

No harmful side effects have been reported with its use. However, you may experience one or more side effects. These are described later.



Criteria for obtaining a medical abortion:

- Pregnancy of **77 days or less** (evaluated by ultrasound during the first clinic visit);
- Good physical and mental health;
- Clear understanding of the instructions and ability to give voluntary and informed consent;
- Abstaining from vaginal intercourse until the abortion is complete;
- Understanding that a surgical abortion may be necessary if the medical abortion fails;
- **Showing up for all follow-up visits;**
- Being reachable at all times by phone and having transportation in case of an emergency;
- Living within one hour of a hospital with an emergency department.



Contraindications to a medical abortion:

Certain health conditions rule out having a medical abortion; a comprehensive assessment will be done by the nurse.

Notes

The steps in a medical abortion

1. Pre-procedure meeting: see page 1

The medication needed for the abortion will either be given to you at the clinic, or you will be given a prescription to obtain it from the pharmacy.

2. Day 1: After you've seen the doctor

- ☐ Take the mifepristone, 1 oral tablet (by mouth).

3. Day 2 or 3 (24-48 hours after taking the mifepristone):

It is recommended to take an anti-inflammatory, such as naproxen sodium (Aleve, Naprosyn), OR ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) AND acetaminophen (Tylenol, Atasol), as well as an antinausea medication such as dimenhydrinate (Gravol) **one hour before** inserting the misoprostol tablets (as prescribed by your doctor).

- ☐ Take the misoprostol as prescribed by your doctor.
 - For **vaginal use**, first lubricate the inside of the vagina with lubricating jelly. Then insert the four tablets as far as possible into the vagina.
 - For **oral use**, let the tablets dissolve on both sides of your mouth, between your cheek and lower gum, for 30 minutes. Then chew and swallow what is left of the tablets with water.



Important

If you experience unbearable pain despite the medication, or heavy bleeding (soaking through more than one pad every hour for more than two hours):

- **During business hours:** call the clinic (see contact information on the last page)
- **Outside of business hours:** go directly to the Emergency department

It is recommended you rest for three hours after taking the misoprostol, due to expected bleeding and period-type cramps.

4. Day 7 to 14: Follow-up visit in person or by phone

If necessary, the following will be done:

- ☐ A second blood test;
- ☐ A gynecological examination;
- ☐ An ultrasound;
- ☐ Insertion of a contraceptive implant or IUD.



Follow-up appointment

Date: _____

Time: _____

This visit is important to make sure you have no complications and that the abortion is complete. If this is not the case, the doctor will discuss treatment options with you, including surgical abortion.

5. Subsequent visits: as needed

- ☐ Follow-up visits could be needed in some cases.



Important

Risk of infection

Vaginal intercourse is not recommended for seven days.

It is also recommended you:

- Use sanitary pads. Do not use tampons for two weeks.
- You can take a shower, a bath, and go swimming at home. Wait seven days before swimming in a river, lake, or hot tub.



- Avoid using vaginal douches, suppositories and deodorants. **Their use is not recommended, at any time.**

Possible symptoms

Vaginal bleeding

The bleeding may start after you take the mifepristone. However, it most often starts within a few hours of taking the misoprostol. At first, the bleeding will resemble a heavier period; you may even pass blood clots. After the pregnancy tissue is expelled, the bleeding will gradually subside over a two-week period.

Abdominal pain

Usually, you will experience lower abdominal pain after taking misoprostol; the cramps can sometimes be painful. They will come in waves and can be relieved by taking an anti-inflammatory and acetaminophen together.

You should start taking these medications one hour before taking the misoprostol in order to prevent and relieve any possible pain.

If you are still in pain, you can take the pain medication prescribed by your doctor (e.g., morphine).

Once the pregnancy tissue has been expelled, the cramping will subside. You will continue to have some mild pain for a few days.

Other side effects

Some women sometimes have nausea, vomiting or diarrhea after taking mifepristone or misoprostol. These side effects are short-lived and can be relieved by an antinausea medication such as dimethydrinate (e.g., Gravol).

You should start taking Gravol one hour before taking the misoprostol in order to prevent nausea.

You may also experience fever and chills, which will only last for a short time (about 30-60 minutes) and should not persist for more than 24 hours after taking misoprostol. As needed, take an anti-inflammatory or acetaminophen.

When to consult?

Emergency situations are rare.

However, consult a doctor as soon as possible if you experience the following symptoms:

- You are bleeding through more than one sanitary pad every hour for at least two hours.
- Your abdominal pain is not relieved by rest, heat or cold (your preference), or medication.
- You have been vomiting for more than four hours.
- You develop a fever: oral temperature higher than 38.5 °C (101.3 °F) more than 24 hours after taking misoprostol.

For information:
Call **INFO-SANTÉ (811)**
at any time.

Possible complications

Infection

The uterus could become infected after a medical abortion. The infection must be treated with antibiotics.

Hemorrhage

You may bleed heavily during the abortion and in the days that follow (you may even pass blood clots). A second procedure is sometimes needed to stop the bleeding. In rare cases, a blood transfusion is needed to replace the blood you lost.

Incomplete abortion

Mifepristone and misoprostol may not cause a complete abortion. In this case, a surgical abortion may be necessary (dilation-suction-curettage).

Continuation of the pregnancy and birth defects

Sometimes, abortion does not successfully eliminate the contents of the uterus. In this case, a surgical abortion will be necessary. If the pregnancy were to continue, there would be a significant risk of birth defects for the fetus.

Medication allergy

As with any medication, there is a risk of an allergic reaction.

Other complications could also occur in very rare cases. For more information or if you have any questions, speak to your doctor.

Birth control

There is a risk you could get pregnant immediately after having the abortion. For this reason, you need to use a method of birth control.

It is important that you start it quickly (in general, at least seven days before resuming vaginal intercourse), according to the doctor's or nurse's recommendations.

If you've had unprotected sex, you can easily obtain emergency contraception (the morning-after pill) for free from the CLSC, a school nurse, or a pharmacy. **You must take it within 120 hours (5 days) after you've had unprotected sex.** You can also ask to have a copper IUD inserted as emergency contraception; this must be done within seven days of you having unprotected sex



Emotions

For some women, this decision is a relatively easy one, while for others it is more difficult. If you'd like, the nurse can help you to make an informed decision.

Abortion is a highly personal experience for each woman.

After the procedure, some women feel relief, while others have a harder time grieving the loss. The fact that you feel relieved doesn't mean you can't also feel sadness and guilt.

It is important that you acknowledge your emotions.

If you are tired, get some rest and take care of yourself. You may not want to have sex for a while after the procedure. Don't hesitate to talk about your feelings with your partner or with a loved one.



Need help?

If you want, you can also meet with a psychosocial worker to talk about your abortion.

You can call the clinic for an appointment:

Info-Santé 811

24/7

811

Grossesse secours (help line)

Monday to Friday,
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

514-271-0554

Contact information

- ☐ **Family planning/VIP clinic (CLIMATS)**
Centre multiservices de santé et de services sociaux de Vaudreuil-Dorion
3031 boulevard de la Gare, Vaudreuil-Dorion
450-455-6171, ext. 71363
- ☐ **Family planning/VIP clinic Hôpital Anna-Laberge**
200 boulevard Brisebois, Châteauguay
450-699-2605 | 1-800-700-0621, ext. 2605 (toll-free)
- ☐ **Hôpital du Suroît**
150 rue Saint-Thomas, Salaberry-de-Valleyfield
450-371-9920