

Whole Woman's Health of Baltimore
Transforming healthcare one woman at a time
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FIRST TRIMESTER ABORTION SERVICES INFORMATION

To Our Patients and Their Friends and Family,

At Whole Women's Health, our emphasis is on the whole woman – your head, your heart and your body. You are the most important person involved in your health care and we encourage your participation. Many of our patients feel alone and afraid-yet 37% of American women have an abortion by the age of 45. We strongly support your ability to decide what's best for you and are here to guide you and provide you with information. We will treat you with excellent medical care and respond to your needs as best we can.

The more you understand, the better you will be able to take care of yourself. Your informed participation in decisions regarding your healthcare is important to us. You probably have many questions regarding your abortion procedure. This packet is designed to address those concerns. Please read the information **carefully** and if you have any questions please ask a staff person at any time or the counselor when you meet with her.

We will try to make your stay with us as comfortable and brief as possible. There is some waiting time between the stages of your medical work up and we advise you to read all the accompanying information while you're waiting. During your visit(s) you will:

1. Complete self medical history forms
2. Have an ultrasound to estimate the length of pregnancy
3. Discuss payment and anesthesia options
4. Have pre-operative lab work, including a simple blood test and vital signs.
5. Meet privately with us to discuss the abortion procedure, aftercare instructions and birth control options. This is a good time to ask your questions.
6. Have a pelvic exam with the physician followed by the abortion procedure.
7. Recuperate with our nurse in the recovery room.

LENGTH OF PREGNANCY

We will perform an ultrasound to determine the length of your pregnancy and to confirm the pregnancy is in the uterus. An ultrasound is a test that uses sound waves to see the pelvic structures. It is NOT AN X-RAY and there is no radiation. An ultrasound is done while you lie down and a gel solution is applied to your abdomen. If you are early in the pregnancy we may need to do a vaginal ultrasound. There is little or no discomfort while the ultrasound is being performed.

An ultrasound is considered the most reliable method of determining the length of pregnancy. Although you may have had an ultrasound done elsewhere before coming to our office, we need to perform one here.

PAYMENT

We require the entire fee be paid before having the abortion. Payment must be made in either cash, money order, or credit card (MasterCard/Visa/Discover & Debit Cards).

Our fees include pre-operative medications to help with relaxation, pain and nausea. We also offer sedation for a minimal fee- see the section on “Pain Management” for more information on this. You may have additional fees if the physician or medical staff find you need extra medications or testing. These may include, but are not limited to, injectable antibiotics, early detection pregnancy test, urine culture, throat culture, or Rhogam injection.

It is very important that we have your correct telephone number and address, especially in case your lab work indicates that you will need to return to the clinic to repeat testing or the procedure. We are very respectful of your privacy and keep all your information confidential. We will only call you if there is an emergency. There are no additional costs in the rare case that we need to repeat the procedure.

We offer the Depo Provera birth control injection to our patients after the abortion is finished. This method of birth control lasts for 3 months and costs \$65. Please let a staff person know if you are interested.

If the abortion procedure is not performed due to patient request or physician advice, you will be responsible for payment of services rendered such as the pregnancy test, ultrasound, and lab tests. All other fees will be refunded.

LAB TESTING

In the lab we will check your blood pressure, weight, pulse, and temperature. There are also some laboratory tests that we need to perform. For these tests we will need a sample of blood. We need to check your blood for iron count and Rh factor. If your blood is found to be Rh negative you will need an injection of Rhogam after your abortion. Rhogam prevents antibodies from being formed in your blood that would cause problems with future pregnancies. If you're Rh negative, it is important to receive the Rhogam injection with every pregnancy.

COUNSELING

You will meet with a counselor who will go over the abortion procedure, how to take care of yourself afterwards and answer any concerns you may have emotionally. Legally we must obtain your written consent for the abortion. **An abortion will not be performed on any woman who does not want one, regardless of age.** The counselor will discuss birth control options and, if you choose, will provide you with a method to use after the abortion. She will also review your post-op instructions.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

Local Anesthesia: In addition to the medications we give you pre-operatively, the physician will administer an injection of pain-stopping medication into your cervix. You will be fully awake, but feel less pain. You can expect to have cramping during the procedure.

IM Sedation: This is done by injecting medication (fentanyl or nubain, versed, and atropine) into your muscle. It will help you with pain management and relaxation-you will not be asleep during the abortion, but you will be sedated. The Sedation is in addition to the local anesthesia and there may be an extra fee of \$25 for IV Sedation. Please let staff person know if you are interested.

Oral Sedatives: We offer a few options in addition to our standard medication and the local anesthesia for our patients who need a little something extra. These options may include Xanax or Vicodin. Please ask a staff person if you are interested.

REMEMBER: You MUST have someone escort you home if you use sedation. You cannot drive or take a taxi home alone. You also must have had nothing to eat for 3 hours before your appointment.

PROCEDURE

After the anesthesia of your choice is administered, the physician will perform a pelvic exam to determine the exact position of your uterus. This is done by inserting two fingers in the vagina and putting one hand on the lower abdomen. Then the physician places a speculum inside the vagina to keep the vaginal walls apart. S/he will hold the cervix, the opening to the uterus, with an instrument called a tenaculum. The physician will then insert several narrow metal rods, called dilators, into the cervix to further open it. The physician uses suction canula and other specialized instruments to remove the pregnancy from the uterus. The entire process can take 10 minutes. A staff person will be in the room along with you and the doctor to help you through the procedure.

RECOVERY

Following the abortion our staff will escort you to aftercare, where we have juice, cookies, and crackers for you. You will have some cramps and bleeding at this time. Cramps are expected, as the uterus must return to its normal size after the pregnancy is removed. Our staff will give you some medication for pain and monitor how you are feeling. You will be in the recovery room until you feel ready to go home (usually about 30 minutes).

PRESCRIPTIONS

The doctor will prescribe several medications for you after the procedure, including antibiotics to prevent infection and a pain medication to help manage cramping. These may be filled at any pharmacy.

CONTRACEPTION

At Whole Woman's Health we want to make sure your reproductive health needs continue to be met after your abortion. For some women, not getting pregnant again is the most pressing issue on their mind the day of their abortion; for other women it is difficult to imagine being sexually active any time soon after their abortion procedure. We're here to help with whatever your needs are, whenever you're ready.

On the day of your abortion we can start you on birth control pills, the vaginal ring, the patch, or the depo provera shot. Sometimes the doctor can even insert an IUD during the abortion procedure. If you're interested in non-hormonal methods like a diaphragm, or a tubal ligation, let us know and we can talk about how to get started. As you know, part of taking care of yourself after the abortion is avoiding vaginal intercourse until your check up—so for the next 2-3 weeks you'll be using the most reliable birth control method of all (no intercourse)!

In the next few months you'll need to get an annual exam and a pap smear (if you haven't had one in the last year). We offer annual exams and pap smears at Whole Woman's Health, and you'll find that just as with abortion care, the gyn care we offer is supportive and inclusive. You have a few options:

- Get the pap done while you're having your abortion and come back another day-- at your follow up if you'd like-- for the rest of the annual exam, OR
- Get the annual exam and pap at the same visit as your follow up, OR
- Come back within three months of your abortion. All annual exams/pap tests done at Whole Woman's Health on the same day as your abortion or within three months afterward receive a discounted rate.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

First trimester abortion is a safe surgical procedure and has approximately one to ten times safer than normal childbirth. Complications range from minor to severe, but the majority are minor and easily treatable.

Complications that can occur during or after the abortion include:

- Infection (less than 1%)
- Incomplete or failed abortion (less than 1%)
- Heavy Bleeding (less than 0.5%)
- Injury to uterus or near by pelvic structure (less than 0.5%)
- Cervical tear (less than 0.5%)
- Continued pregnancy (less than 1%)
- Death (1 in every 60,000)

Many complications are also a result of NOT taking care of yourself after leaving our office. **It is essential that you follow the post-operative instructions explained to you.** Even though complications are rare, you should call us immediately if there is a problem such as those mentioned on your post-operative instruction sheet. A Whole Woman's Health staff person is on call 24 hours a day. A complication that is detected early is usually easily treated and corrected before it can become a major problem.