

Whole Woman's Health
Changing the World, One Woman at a Time.
www.wholewomanshealth.com

Post Operative Instructions

After your abortion is completed you may resume most normal activity. However, there are some restrictions that need to be followed to lessen your risk of post-operative complications. This information sheet is to advise you of what to expect and do after an abortion and what to do should the unexpected happen.

Physical Changes

Bleeding

Bleeding after an abortion is normal and the amount and duration of bleeding time varies with each patient. Your experience may vary from no bleeding at all to spotting or bleeding off and on for several weeks. Since bleeding may be sporadic, wearing a full size sanitary pad is recommended. The amount is the most important thing to look for. If you are bleeding heavily try to measure the number of pads you use in a certain amount of time, If there are clots that go beyond the pad, try to estimate how many there are and size, i.e. nickel, quarter, silver dollar size. **If your bleeding is heavy (saturating 1 pad in less than an hour for a few hours back to back) call our office immediately.** When calling, please have your pharmacy's phone number ready. If you call at night, we will need the phone number of a 24-hour pharmacy.

Fever

A fever of over 100.4 degrees could be an indication of early infection and should be reported to our office immediately. For the first seven days following your termination, take your temperature every morning and every evening. If it goes over 100.4 degrees, please call us immediately. An infection discovered early is easily treated by our doctor.

Call our office immediately if you experience the following:

- If you are soaking more than 2 maxi pads per hour for 2 hours or more.
- If you are passing clots larger than a half dollar.
- If you have cramping which interfere with the activity and is unrelieved by pain medication.
- If you have a temperature over 100.4 for two reading in a row.
- If you have an allergic reaction to one of the medications you have been given.

Breasts

If your breasts become swollen or tender, wear a tight bra (sports bra) and wear the bra while sleeping. You may also use ice packs applied to your breasts for a few minutes twice a day. While this condition may be uncomfortable, it will pass and doesn't require special medical attention.

Menstruation

Your period should begin in approximately 3 to 6 weeks. It may take your body some time to regulate after the abortion. Your next period may be heavier than usual with more cramping and possible clotting. If you do not get a period within 6 weeks, return to Whole Woman's Health as soon as possible.

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General Information

Activity

You must limit your physical activity for 2 weeks after your procedure. You should avoid any of the following activities as they could cause heavy bleeding or hemorrhaging.

- ** No heavy lifting (nothing more than 15 lbs.) **
- ** No running **
- ** No gym classes or other strenuous activities **

Infection

In order to reduce your risk of infection you must have NOTHING in your vagina until your follow-up appointment. This means:

- ** No tampons (you must use pads for any bleeding)
- ** No sexual intercourse ** No douching
- ** No tub baths (showers only) ** No swimming

At your follow-up appointment the nurse will let you know when you may resume normal activities.

Pregnancy and Contraception

There is no way to know when you will ovulate after your abortion, so it is possible to become pregnant at any time. A reliable method of contraception is recommended when you resume intercourse to prevent another unwanted pregnancy. Unwanted pregnancies occur for many reasons. The most common are failure of contraceptive method, failure of a couple to use contraceptives, or an unfortunate lack of knowledge about birth control. If sexual intercourse is practiced without the use of contraception there is an 80% probability that pregnancy will occur within a year. We are happy to help you with making a choice of method and giving you samples if possible.

Medications

It is very important that you take your medications as prescribed. We will send you home with prescriptions for antibiotics (to prevent infection) and pain medication. Please note that it is normal to experience cramping after the procedure. Cramping should be light to moderate and you can use ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), Tylenol, or the prescribed pain medication to relieve the pain. DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN or any products that contain aspirin, as aspirin is a blood thinner and could increase your bleeding. Increased cramps, accompanied by bleeding, may occur 3 to 6 days after your procedure as your hormone level drops.

If rash or itching occurs while taking antibiotics, discontinue medication and take Benadryl, over-the-counter, according to the directions. Call our office on the next business day. If swelling of the throat or tongue occurs or you have difficulty breathing while taking medications, discontinue taking them and go to the emergency room immediately. If vomiting occurs, discontinue medication and call the office on the next business day.

Feelings

After an abortion some women feel elated and relieved while others feel sad. It is best not to ignore your feelings, but to talk about them with someone you trust. If your feelings become overwhelming for you, you may need professional help. We are happy to provide post abortion discussion and/or referrals. Please call our office anytime. We also recommend the following books, which have proven to help many women in your same situation. (Some of these books are for sale here – please ask a staff person)

The Healing Choice, Your Guide to Emotional Recovery After an Abortion, by Candace De Puy and Dana Dovitch.

Peace After Abortion, by Ava Torre-Bueno

Unspeakable Losses, Understanding the Experience of Pregnancy Loss, Miscarriage and Abortion, by Kim Kluger-Bell.

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If you need to talk with someone after the abortion, there are several places we recommend:

Exhale, an after-abortion counseling talkline: (866) 439-4253
Backline, honest pregnancy options discussion and information: (888) 493-0092
Charlotte Taft and Shelley Oram: (505) 757-2991

Post-Operative Exam

It is important that you have a post-operative exam two to three weeks after the procedure. This is the time when we can check to make sure that everything is back to normal, that you don't have any infections and that the abortion was successful. This is also a good time to discuss contraception and your ongoing GYN care.

We recommend that you have this examination with us so that we can be sure to follow through on the care that was started here with your abortion. There is no fee for the post operative exam. However, there will be a fee of \$30.00 if you do not get in for your appointment within 30 days of the procedure. If you request or require any additional services, such as lab testing, there may be additional charges. Some women experience a yellowish-brownish discharge for several weeks after the procedure. If this discharge is accompanied by itching, burning or bad odor it may be vaginitis which needs to be diagnosed and treated. This can be done at your follow-up visit for \$20.00.

_____ I will return to Whole Woman's Health.

Day: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____:_____

It is our sincerest concern that your experience at Whole Woman's Health was positive and that you were taken care of in a pleasant and professional manner. Please let a staff person know if there is anything we can do to further assist you.