

 **Whole Woman's Health**  
*Changing the World, One Woman at a Time*  
**MEDICATION ABORTION INFORMATION**  
**(Up to 7 weeks gestation / 9 weeks LMP)**  
www.wholewomanshealth.com

To Our Patients and Their Friends and Family,

We understand that the decision to end a pregnancy may be among the hardest decisions you will face in your lifetime. It is a choice that must make sense not only in one's head but also in one's heart. Many women feel as if they are the only woman they know who has had an abortion. This is simply not true. Over 1/3 of American women, nearly 40%, will have an abortion in their lifetime. Most people know and love a woman who has had an abortion. You are not alone.

Whole Woman's Health is committed to respecting your choice. We understand the complex feelings that often accompany decisions about pregnancy. We know that no one gets pregnant in order to have an abortion. No one wants to face this decision. But many women do. We are here to comfort you and listen to what matters most to you.

Many women tell us they never thought they'd have an abortion. We know how normal those thoughts are. We also know that there is not simply one kind of woman who has an abortion. Don't let stereotypes damage your self-esteem. We know you are a good woman making good choices for your life and we are here to support you. We are committed to helping you find the strength within yourself to face this difficult decision and become empowered because of it...Here, we care for you, mind, body and heart. Thank you for letting us be the women and men to help you during this time.

You probably have many questions regarding your abortion procedure. The more you understand, the better you will be able to take care of yourself. 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. We invite your support person to accompany you and support you throughout as much of the visit as you wish him/her to be involved in. Your comfort is important to us.

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 and general paperwork.
2. Have an ultrasound to estimate the length of pregnancy.
3. Have pre-operative lab work, including a simple blood test and vital signs.
4. View the Whole Woman's Health educational DVD that goes over your procedure and the aftercare instructions.
5. Meet with an intake counselor to discuss and review medical history, payment, contact information, etc.
6. Meet with a counselor who will answer any remaining questions you have about the procedure, discuss the medications, how to take them and what to expect, aftercare instructions and birth control options.
7. Consult with the doctor and take your first medication. At that time you will also receive the misoprostol to take at home, and receive a prescription for antibiotics to prevent infection and Vicodin for pain management.

#### **ULTRASOUND / 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 uses sound waves to see your 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.

### **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, at an additional charge, 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.

### **EDUCATIONAL DVD**

We have made a DVD for you that explains the abortion procedure, medications, aftercare instructions, pain management options – everything from start to finish. We hope it will answer some of your questions. Feel free to watch it with your escort and jot down any questions to discuss during your one-on-one time with the counselor.

### **INTAKE / PAYMENT**

Whole Woman's Health clinics accept health insurance and Medicaid/MAP for abortion services whenever possible. More often than not, health insurance companies cover abortion 100%. Whole Woman's Health also works tirelessly to help raise funds for our uninsured patients. You and our WWH staff should have done most of the leg work before today if you are planning to use insurance, public assistance, or funding to pay for your abortion. We require our portion 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 200 mg mifepristone and 800 mcg misoprostol. We also give you some prescriptions – one for Vicodin or Tylenol with Codeine, a strong pain medication that you can take at home after inserting misoprostol, and others for antibiotics to prevent infection. 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. We are very respectful of your privacy and will 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.

If your 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.

### **COUNSELING**

You will meet with a counselor who will check in with you about how you are feeling, answer any remaining questions you may have, and review how to use the medications. This is a good time to talk about your decision to terminate the pregnancy and any concerns you may have emotionally. Our counselors review the risks and benefits and sign forms with you consenting to the abortion. 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 your abortion. See section on contraception that follows. They will also review your aftercare instructions.

## **TAKING THE PILLS**

After your ultrasound, labwork and counseling, you will consult with the doctor, who will review your ultrasound and medical history and give you the medications and prescriptions. At this time the doctor will also review the process and may do a pelvic exam. The first medication, Mifeprex, is taken orally after your consultation with the doctor. Mifeprex stops the production of pregnancy hormone and causes the pregnancy to detach from the uterine wall. Some women report a little nausea after taking Mifeprex, but most women don't report any side effects at all.

24 to 48 hours after taking Mifeprex, you will use four tablets of misoprostol buccally, or in between your cheek and gums. You will put the tablets into your mouth between your cheek and gums and let them dissolve; if they have not dissolved after 30 minutes you may swallow what remains of the pills with water. misoprostol will cause your uterus to contract and your cervix to open slightly, allowing your body to expel the pregnancy, and can be accompanied by mild to intense cramping and heavy bleeding. You don't have to return to the office when you take misoprostol, but we do ask that you are at home or somewhere comfortable within an hour of emergency medical care.

Very strong cramping is a normal part of the process and cramping typically starts about one to four hours after you take the misoprostol. Generally the whole abortion is done within 24 hours. Heavy bleeding and passing clots is also very normal. You may pass small or large clots (up to the size of a lemon) within the first few hours.

## **REQUIREMENTS / POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS**

Because of the risk of hemorrhage, on the day that you use the misoprostol pills, you must:

- Be at home or in the home of someone who knows what is happening,
- Have a phone,
- Be within one hour of an emergency room,
- Have no other obligations including small children to care for,
- Have with you, or "on call," a support person who knows what is happening and who has a car.

Complications that can occur during or after the abortion include:

- Infection (less than 1%)
- Incomplete or failed abortion (less than 1%)
- Heavy bleeding
- Continued pregnancy (less than 1%)
- Death (1 in every 60,000)

## **PREVENTING INFECTION / PRESCRIPTIONS**

During a medical abortion, your cervix is slightly dilated, so you need to be particularly careful not to expose yourself to infection by introducing bacteria into the vagina. Do not put anything into your vagina, have sexual intercourse, or sit in a bath until your final follow up at the clinic. Use maxi pads instead of tampons until you return to our office for your follow-up exam.

The physician will prescribe some antibiotics for you to start taking preventatively once you take the Mifeprex pill. We recommend taking antibiotics with something in your stomach to prevent nausea. Take these antibiotics exactly as directed by the physician, and please call us if you experience any signs of infection.

## **MANAGING SIDE EFFECTS**

Drink plenty of fluids and eat lightly the day before and on the day you take the misoprostol pills. misoprostol may cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, and fever, so you need fluids. Spicy or fried foods worsen the distress. If you are concerned about nausea, our physician can prescribe a medication to help manage nausea. If the vomiting and diarrhea are severe, call Whole Woman's Health. Our nurses are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We will give you a prescription for Vicodin or Tylenol with Codeine (to help with pain relief) when you receive the misoprostol. Please fill this prescription before you insert the misoprostol. In order to prevent intense

cramping take the first tablet of pain medication 15 – 20 minutes before inserting the misoprostol. After that you can take it every four hours as needed. A heating pad or hot water bottle will also help alleviate pain from cramping. Other non-aspirin pain relievers can also be used such as ibuprofen and Tylenol.

Please note that drinking alcohol with one of the antibiotics you will be taking will cause SERIOUS side effects. Please follow our instructions carefully!

### **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.

If you are interested, we can start you on birth control pills, the Nuva Ring, or the depo provera shot soon after your abortion. If you're interested in non-hormonal methods like condoms, a diaphragm, an IUD, 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 covered.

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.