

# Taking care of yourself after your procedure

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## How will I feel?

Each woman reacts to having an abortion in her own way. It takes a different amount of time for each woman to recover.

Most women feel relief following the procedure. Some women may also have feelings of sadness, guilt or loss. These feelings are normal and should bother you less as time passes. It may be helpful to talk over your feelings with someone you trust.

The clinic social worker is also available to you for support and counseling.

The medications used during the procedure can affect your body and mind for up to 24 hours.

For 24 hours after your procedure do not do any of the following:

- drink alcohol
  - drive
  - operate machinery
  - use appliances that could cause injury
  - make any major decisions.
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## **Will I have pain or cramps?**

You may have some menstrual cramps, like during a period, or slightly stronger pain for the first few days after your procedure. If you are uncomfortable, try resting with a hot water bottle or heating pad. It may help to take the non-prescription pain medication that you usually use at home.

## **Will there be any bleeding?**

Most women will have some bleeding after their procedure. The bleeding may be just spotting, or like a heavy period. The bleeding may stop and start. It may last a few days, or up to 2 weeks. You may also pass some clots.

## **When will I have my next period?**

Your next period should come 4 to 6 weeks after your procedure. The amount of bleeding with this period may vary from a normal period. It may be lighter or heavier.

## **When can I use tampons?**

Use pads after the procedure. Using tampons right after your procedure may increase the risk of infection. You can use tampons when you get your next period.

## **When can I take a bath or shower?**

You may have a bath or shower right away.

## **When can I have sex?**

You can have sex when:

- you feel ready. Every woman is different.
- your bleeding has stopped. Having sex soon after an abortion can increase your bleeding and cramping.

## Can I get pregnant?

Yes, you can get pregnant soon after an abortion, even before your next period starts. Having this procedure does not change your ability to become pregnant. If you would like help to choose a method of birth control, talk with the clinic staff.

## When do the signs of pregnancy go away?

Most of the signs of pregnancy will soon go away. Morning sickness is one of the first symptoms to disappear. You may have mood changes for a while, until your hormone levels return to normal.

You may have some milk leaking from your breasts for a few days.

If this happens:

- use a warm or cold compress on your breasts
- avoid stimulating the nipple area
- wear a tight-fitting bra

It can take up to 2 weeks for your breasts to return to normal.

## What if I am going to take birth control pills?

If you are going to use birth control pills, take your first pill on the Sunday after your procedure. You will be protected against pregnancy after taking all of the first package of pills. Until then, if you have intercourse, use another method of birth control as well, such as condoms.

Your birth control pill may not protect you against pregnancy if you are taking other medications at the same time, such as:

- antibiotics
- cold or allergy medication
- antacids for stomach upset
- some sleeping pills or sedatives
- some medications for migraine headaches

If you are taking any of these medications, use another method of birth control as well, until you start your next package of birth control pills.

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## When do I need follow up care?

You need to have a follow-up examination 3 to 6 weeks after the procedure. You may go to your doctor or come back to the clinic. You can write your follow-up appointment on the back of this booklet.

## When should I be concerned?

Abortions are very safe and very few complications occur.

### Call your doctor or the clinic if you have:

- heavy bleeding, soaking more than 2 pads in less than 2 hours
- pain that is not relieved by your regular non-prescription pain medication
- fever – a temperature greater than 38.5°C (101.3°F) or chills
- a bad smelling or unusual discharge from your vagina

**If you are not able to reach the doctor or the clinic, get medical help right away.**

In an emergency go to the nearest Emergency Department that serves adults.

Do not go to the Emergency Department at McMaster University Medical Centre. It is for children only.

## Your follow up appointment is:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

At: \_\_\_\_\_

## If you have any questions or concerns:

- Call the doctor that did your procedure at: \_\_\_\_\_
- Or call the clinic at 905-527-4322, ext. 42522.