



We Make the World a Better Place for Women

Thank you for choosing Northland Family Planning.

We were happy to support and care for you today, however it is important to continue taking care of yourself after you leave.

QUICK LIST OF MEDICATIONS

Begin taking your medications on the day of your procedure, do not wait. Take them as directed and continue to take them until they are gone. Note: Not all patients will be prescribed all 4 medications listed below.

****If you took the antibiotic Azithromycin before your procedure and successfully kept it down, you will not be given an additional antibiotic to take at home. If you took Azithromycin before your procedure but were unable to keep it down, you may have all of the following medications.**

AZITHROMYCIN: Take all tablets immediately with food and a large glass of water. After this, you are done with Azithromycin.

1-2 hours later take:

METRONIDAZOLE: One tablet is taken by mouth with food and a large glass of water every 12 hours. No alcohol while taking this medication and for two days after this medication is finished. You should be done with this medication in 3 days.

IBUPROFEN: One tablet is taken by mouth every 6-8 hours, if needed for pain. Take on a full stomach. (No more than 4 pills in 24 hours). Take ibuprofen in between Azithromycin and Metronidazole to help avoid an upset stomach.

MISOPROSTOL: One tablet is taken 3 times a day (1 tablet every 8 hours).

All medications should be taken with food and a full glass of water, do not take medications on an empty stomach. Alcohol is not allowed while taking any of these medications.

Note to patients who live outside of Michigan: If you are given a prescription for a narcotic pain reliever, it must be filled in Michigan. It is suggested you fill non-narcotic pain relievers in Michigan as well.

WHEN TO CALL IMMEDIATELY

The following information is a quick guide on when you need to call us immediately. There is additional information on post-surgery symptoms throughout this packet.

***HEAVY BLEEDING:** Changing a full size completely filled pad (see pictures on page 3) every 15-20 minutes for greater than 2 hours

***BLOOD CLOTS:** Passing clots continuously for greater than 30 minutes

***FEVER:** If you have a temperature of 101.0 for greater than 4 hours despite taking Tylenol or Motrin

***PAIN:** If you have severe pain that is not relieved with pain medication for 2 hours or more

***"FEELING SICK":** If you have vomiting or diarrhea for greater than 4 hours AND it has been at least 24 hours since your surgery

During business hours, call the office you were seen at. After hours call 1-800-612-0973. If you are calling from outside of Michigan call 1-248-233-1081.

NORTHLAND FAMILY PLANNING CENTERS

SOUTHFIELD – STERLING HEIGHTS – WESTLAND

1-800-447-7354

www.northlandfamilyplanning.com
Emergency After Hours Number

Calling from Michigan: **1-800-612-0973**

Calling from outside of Michigan: **1-248-233-1081**



READ & TAKE HOME

RECOVERY AT HOME

After your abortion, it is equally as important to give attention to both your physical and your emotional health. We approach abortion care with a philosophy of connecting your head and your heart. We know each influences the other.

Please read over both parts of your Recovery At Home booklet – and call us if you have questions or concerns. Your health – YOU – are important to us!

Please refer to our website video for a verbal summary of your home care instructions **before calling the after hours number as it may answer the questions you have. Go to www.northlandfamilyplanning.com and select “Taking care of yourself after your abortion” on the homepage.**

First, understand that, though you may feel great very quickly, you have had a surgical procedure. Not unlike other types of surgery, unavoidable complications, although rare, may occur. By paying attention to your body and following your Recovery Instructions, you can minimize the risk of complications.

It is very important that you understand what to expect and what to do if you have any problems.

Remember, we want to help. If you are worried, always call us first. Since we are specialists in abortion surgery we know more about problems, complications and how to take care of them than those who do not do this type of surgery. Call us - we can help you quickly.



Taking Care of Yourself - **Physical Health**

Did my abortion surgery go well?

We have examined all the tissue that was removed at the time of surgery and, unless you were told differently, we feel confident that the procedure is complete and you are no longer pregnant.

However, there is always a rare possibility of a missed or incomplete abortion or that a second pregnancy (double pregnancy) could co-exist, either in the fallopian tube or in the corner of the uterus.

Therefore we ask that you be aware of the following:

Any symptom of pregnancy that you may have had should be gone in one week or, at the latest, in 10 days. If you are still having any symptoms after 3 weeks, we would like to see you. It is very important that you have a follow up visit in 2-3 weeks to be absolutely certain that you are no longer pregnant, and to be sure there are no complications or problems and that you are healing properly.

Call the office for an appointment. There is no charge for this follow-up visit.

Note: Any pregnancy test taken in the next month may remain positive due to pregnancy hormones in your system. This is normal. Even a home pregnancy test may read positive at this point, so do not waste your money. Come in for your follow-up appointment. Call us sooner if you are concerned about continued pregnancy symptoms.

The Importance of a Follow-up Exam:

Because we care about you, we will call you our next business day to see how you are feeling. We offer follow-up appointments with our Nurse Midwife for all patients within 2-3 weeks post abortion. We recommend a follow-up appointment if you are concerned about any symptoms, you have not started a period within 8 weeks of your abortion, if you think you may still be pregnant, or you need further emotional care.

***Northland Family Planning provides this follow-up exam **FREE**
if you schedule within 4 weeks of your abortion.***

Taking Care of Yourself Post Abortion

- **Listen to your body.** Get extra rest if you feel you need it, if you are easily fatigued, or if you have cramps or heavy bleeding.
- You may resume **normal activities** as soon as you feel up to it.
- **Avoid heavy lifting** (more than 25 lbs) and **strenuous exercise** for at least one week.
- **If you received any I.V. sedation**, you cannot drive, operate heavy machinery or make any decision requiring clear judgment for 24 hours.

- **Take your temperature** each afternoon and evening for the next 5 days. If it is above 101.0 degrees for more than 4 hours, despite taking Motrin or Tylenol, call us immediately.
 - Fever can be a symptom of a problem. A fever may indicate infection and it is important that you report it so you can be treated. Infections occur infrequently, and are almost always associated with fever, abdominal pain, cramps or a smelly discharge and will most likely occur in the first week.

CRAMPING

Do not be concerned if you experience mild cramping for several days. If you have used all the pain medication you were given, you should be able to obtain relief by taking 2 Advil or Tylenol (NO Aspirin) every 3-4 hours, getting off your feet and by applying an ice pack to your lower abdomen and/or a heating pad to lower back for 20 minutes every hour. You can also try a uterine massage (massaging lower abdominal area) to relieve cramping.

BLEEDING

- If you are changing a full size completely filled pad every 15-20 minutes for greater than 2 hours, call us immediately. If bleeding is less than that but heavier than you thought it would be, call the office in the morning.
- If you are passing clots continuously for more than 25-30 minutes call us immediately.
- **NORMAL BLEEDING:** The normal amount of bleeding following the procedure varies greatly from woman to woman. You may have little or no bleeding for several days, only to start bleeding or notice an increase in 5-7 days. Many women will have bleeding much like a period, which may last for 3-5 days. Some women may have spotting for 2-4 weeks. Passing small or large clots is normal. Brown blood is just old blood being passed.
 - *If you experience bleeding, it is not a period- your period should start in 4 to 8 weeks after your abortion. Your first period may be what you are used to or it could be either very light or very heavy with clots. If it is time for your follow up appointment and you are bleeding, keep your appointment. If you do NOT have a period within 8 weeks, call us immediately.*

HOW MUCH AM I BLEEDING?

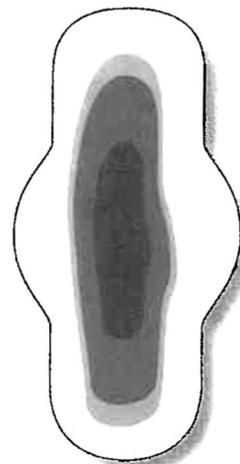
Scant amount

Blood only on tissue when wiped or less than one-inch stain on maxi pad within one hour.



Moderate amount

Less than six-inch stain on maxi pad within one hour.



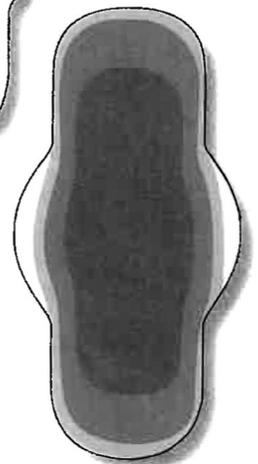
Light amount

Less than four-inch stain on maxi pad within one hour.



Heavy amount

Saturated maxi pad every 15-20 minutes for greater than two hours.



**The after hours answering service number is 1-800-612-0973.
If calling from outside of Michigan, the number is 1-248-233-1081.**

This number is to be used for an emergency only. If you do call this emergency number, make sure you stay off the line and you are able to accept blocked calls so the physician can reach you. Please have a pharmacy number so the physician can call in a prescription, if necessary. All attempts will be made to return your call within 30 minutes; often times it will be 15 minutes. If you do not receive a call back within the hour, please call again. If you think you are having an emergency and you cannot wait for the physician to call you back, call 911.

BIRTH CONTROL PILLS

It is our goal to provide women who desire oral contraceptives the ability to start pills immediately following their abortion with a prescription for low cost pills to fill in our office or you can take your prescription to a pharmacy.

If you need a new birth control prescription, please do not call us to request a change. Instead, you have the following several options:

If you do not have insurance and you do not have a doctor, consider our Quick Start! Low-Cost Birth Control Program for pills you can buy in our office.

Don't have a doctor? Come in to our Gynecology Clinic for a visit with our Nurse Practitioner.

If you do not have insurance, see if you are eligible for the Healthy Michigan Plan, which will cover family planning services without a co-pay. Apply online at www.michigan.gov/mibridges or call the Michigan Health Care Helpline at 1-855-789-5610. We are in network with this program.

Birth control (if applicable):

1. Birth Control Pills or Birth Control Patch: Begin taking the Sunday following your procedure. You are not protected for the first 7 days. Use a back-up method such as condoms during the first week of use. If you have any questions or concerns call us right away. **DO NOT** stop taking your pills.
2. Depo Provera (Birth Control Injection): You may get this option immediately following your procedure or at your follow-up appointment for a minimal charge. You are not protected for the first two weeks after administered. Use a back-up method such as condoms.
3. NuvaRing (Vaginal Ring): You may have NuvaRing inserted immediately following your procedure. You are protected against pregnancy immediately but are strongly advised not to have intercourse for two weeks to avoid infection or complications from the abortion. You may also receive NuvaRing at your follow-up appointment. If inserted after your follow-up appointment you will not be protected from pregnancy and must use a back-up method, such as condoms, for the first seven days after inserted.

Take good care of yourself, you're important!



Here at Northland, we have programs designed to help you explore your reproductive health needs. These include regular GYN care, urgent GYN care, STI testing and treatment, birth control, or other reproductive issues and concerns. Call us - we'd love to sit down with you.

Taking Care of Yourself -

Emotional Health

Whether or not your decision to have an abortion was difficult, you're probably anticipating moving forward in your life. You may be wondering what to expect emotionally as you begin to understand the changes you've been through. Emotions, and the meaning we give to our experiences, are affected by many factors: religion, culture, gender, age, relationships and current life situations, among many others.

When pregnancy occurs, you may feel as if your entire past, present and future are up for examination. It is important to remember that each pregnancy stands alone—the circumstances of this pregnancy are different from any other pregnancy. The same woman who chooses abortion at one time in her life may choose parenthood at another time. In making your decision, you had to consider whether it was the right time to have a child, reviewing your own goals and dreams, assessing personal relationships, and determining what is right and best for your unique life experience. This thoughtful process may have brought up conflicts that are unresolved, or ones you were not even fully aware of until now. It is important to remember that feelings after your abortion may have a great deal to do with these new realizations.

Being sure of your decision before helps your healing process after. While some women experience emotional pain, others do not. In fact, many women describe feelings of relief and look forward to a return of physical wellness and more energy. Both are normal responses. There is no 'right' way to feel – just 'your' –way. It is common to feel anger, empowerment, grief, guilt, relief, shame or spiritual questioning. Expressing your feelings is crucial to emotional health. Sometimes, it's a matter of finding someone you can trust to be non-judgmental so you can share your feelings, such as a counselor or clergy member. Please call if you want to talk. We can schedule an appointment to sit down with you and offer local referrals to sources we trust.

We understand that a decision can be right ... and still be sad.

Feeling sad when you're pregnant and don't want to be can be normal. Grief is part of healing when you experience a loss. Being honest with yourself is always the best path. Punishing yourself or feeling guilty is not necessary and is not good for you. *You can be relieved that you are not pregnant now and feel sad about it at the same time. This is normal. Don't confuse "sad" with "bad."* Trust your ability to know what is right.

Did you know?

Over 1/3 of American women will have an abortion by the age of 45
Women of all ages, races, economic backgrounds and religious beliefs have abortions
Over 1 million abortions occur in the United States each year

Your healing is in your heart... and, our hearts are open to yours

Letting go of blame - Taking Some Control:

Understand why and how you got pregnant when you weren't planning to

For many women, becoming pregnant when they didn't want to is the most difficult part about having an abortion. Birth control measures may have failed you, or other circumstances may have found you unprotected from pregnancy. It is helpful to recognize you are not alone- you got pregnant under the same circumstances in which many other women have also gotten pregnant. This may help you to let go of the shame and self-blame you may be experiencing.

Allow time to grieve

When you have an abortion you are giving something up. You may feel the loss of an idealized pregnancy, of a relationship, of innocence. Remember, even when a loss is voluntary, it can still hurt. It is important to notice your feelings, even if they are painful or uncomfortable. Grief is different for everyone. Many people are surprised at how difficult the grieving process can be. There is no set timeframe and there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Allow yourself whatever time you need.

Honor your experience. You may want to create your own way to acknowledge your loss or changes. It may be as simple as releasing a symbolic object into the water, planting a tree or writing a poem. It would be a way for you to memorialize the day and move forward.

Write a letter. To yourself or the spirit of the child. Please see our website for more information. This can be a very powerful tool for many women.

Share your experience with others. You might find some of your own feelings or experiences in stories of other women who have dealt with painful post-abortion feelings. There are resources on our website for sharing your own story and reading others.

Embrace your Spirituality. Spirituality is different for everyone. Our spirituality is wise and loving, and we usually know when we are honoring it. It's important to discover your own truth and honor it.

“Making a choice about your pregnancy can be a gift of learning and growth. It is an invitation for you to develop a larger vision of yourself. It's a way to practice compassion and loving kindness toward yourself.”
from “Abortion: Finding Your Own Truth” by Corrintha Rebecca Bennett

Special Note to Women in an Abusive Relationship: *If you are afraid of being hurt by your partner or if your partner tries to make you feel bad about yourself, please get help before it gets worse. There are services in your area that can help. Call the National Domestic Abuse Line at 1-800-799-7233 or for sexual assault/incest, call 1-800-656-4673 or find a local number under Social Services in your yellow pages. Counseling for you and/ or your partner are available, as well as shelters, support groups, and information.*

From our Hearts to Yours

Brought to you by - Northland Family Planning Centers

Portions of this handout adapted from “I Know I Made the Right Decision...but” by Charlotte Taft, *ImagineCounseling*, and “Pregnant? Need Help? Pregnancy Options Workbook”, developed by Peg Johnston, Southern Tier Women’s Services.

Resources We Like

BE AWARE: *Many sites are designed by people who do not support a woman’s choice of abortion and want to make you feel bad about yourself. Stick to these sites, or choicelinkup.com.*

www.abortiocarenetwork.com: This is THE Pro-Choice Support and Resource site. No worries about tricks from anti-choicers.

www.northlandfamilyplanning.com: Our own web site is filled with helpful information and thoughtful considerations of all facets of abortion health and total reproductive care. In addition, there are sections for friends, family and male partners who need support too.

www.pregnancyoptions.info: This comprehensive website and workbook, is helpful for those wishing to sort out varying emotions before and after an abortion. In fact, ask for a copy at our reception desk.

www.imaginecounseling.com: If you are having a hard time emotionally either before or after an abortion, this website links you to some self-probing questions and contact with experienced therapists who have worked with abortion patients across the country. You deserve to feel peace. There is no fee for the initial conversation, but there is a fee for the counseling, which you will establish with your counselor.

www.faithaloud.org: This site offers free, confidential spiritual counseling after your abortion. They offer clergy of many different faiths and listen with compassion and respect.

We have found this Talk-Line supportive:

All-Options - www.all-options.org - This confidential and free talkline is dedicated to addressing the broad range of experiences and emotions surrounding pregnancy, parenting, adoption and abortion to women and their loved ones. Talkline services are available seven days a week to callers nationwide. CALL 1- 888-493-0092