

 *-Taking Care of Yourself -
Physical Health*
HOMECARE PACKET

AFTER NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS EMERGENCIES OR QUESTIONS:

If you have a problem, a question or a concern that you feel requires immediate attention **after normal business hours, please call (800) 612-0973**. If you have trouble getting through, **please call (248) 233-1081**. Our answering service will page the physician on-call and someone will call you back. If you go to an emergency room, advise them that you have started a medication abortion using Mifeprex and ask them to page our physician at the phone number above.

TAKE THIS INSTRUCTION SHEET WITH YOU SO THE ER PHYSICIAN WILL KNOW EXACTLY WHAT MEDICATIONS YOU HAVE TAKEN.

Before you start this process FILL ALL PRESCRIPTIONS AT A PHARMACY! We advise you to take your prescriptions to a 24-hour pharmacy or make sure you pick-up before close. Unfortunately, we cannot do anything if you do not pick up your medications before your pharmacy closes.

Attention all out of state patients:

Fill all prescription medications in Michigan before crossing state lines.

POST MIFEPREX INSTRUCTIONS

Day 1

You have received a medication called Mifeprex. A small percentage of women may miscarry before they have inserted the misoprostol tablets. If you think this has happened to you, you must still insert the misoprostol tablets as directed. You may experience the following today:

- Vaginal bleeding and passing clots.
- Cramps in the lower abdominal area and/or pain.
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, fever, fatigue and dizziness.

Azithromycin- This antibiotic can be filled here at our office or at a pharmacy of your choice. Start this today. Medication instructions can be found in the "Quick list of medications" section of this packet.

URGENT WARNING: If your pregnancy continues after you use Mifeprex, the fetus could develop deformities. It is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT that you continue with the next phase of the process. You MUST insert the misoprostol tablets within the instructed time frame (6 – 48 hours after you take the Mifeprex in our office).

Insert the misoprostol any time between:

_____ and _____
(Time and Date) (Time and Date)

- **If you are over 8 weeks, the optimal timing for misoprostol is 24 hours after you take the Mifeprex**

Prior to inserting the Misoprostol at home use this guide to prepare yourself:

- It is advisable for you to have a support person with you or "on call". This person should be aware of the process you are going through and must have a car in case of an emergency.
- Make sure that you have no other immediate obligations, including taking care of small children and/or elderly.
- Eat lightly. Avoid rich, spicy or fried foods.
- No alcohol or drugs. Alcohol thins the blood and may cause heavier bleeding.

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Day of the Misoprostol

The misoprostol tablets that you received will help complete your medication abortion. Your next step is planning for a quiet, restful time to insert the tablets.

Evidence-Based Misoprostol Instructions:

1. Take 800mg of Advil or Ibuprofen thirty minutes before you plan to insert the Misoprostol.
2. Insert the Misoprostol tablets **vaginally**.
 - **How to Insert the Misoprostol vaginally:**
 - a) **Empty your bladder.**
 - b) **Wash your hands.**
 - c) **Push the four Misoprostol tablets one at a time, up into the vagina as far as you can, using your finger.**
 - d) **Lie down for about 30 minutes after you insert the misoprostol into the vagina.**
 - **It's OK if the pills fall out after 30 minutes. If the tablets fall out before 30 minutes, you may reinsert them.**
3. **PAIN MEDICATION** - You have received a prescription for a strong pain reliever. **DO NOT** take aspirin. Take 2 at the first sign of cramping for maximum pain relief. You may take this as needed throughout the misoprostol process according to the directions. If you did not fill your prescription you may take Advil, Ibuprofen or Aleve.

What to Expect During the Misoprostol Process

1. **BLEEDING AND CLOTTING** – Bleeding can range from normal period-like bleeding to very heavy bleeding. You may pass some large clots (up to and including the size of a lemon). Bleeding looks worse in the toilet, so **do not panic**. If you are soaking* (**see definition below**) through 2 or more pads per hour, for 2 consecutive hours, call the clinic immediately. **DO NOT use a tampon or take a bath while you are bleeding**. If you do not begin bleeding within 24 hours, please call the clinic during business hours.
 4. **CRAMPING** – Cramping can range from normal period cramps to very strong cramping, depending on your length of pregnancy. The majority of women are comfortable if they take their pain medication as prescribed. A heating pad may also be helpful. Generally, the cramping will be milder after the pregnancy tissue is passed. If you have severe abdominal pain (not cramping), call us immediately
 5. **VOMITING** – If you are experiencing vomiting more than 24 hours after inserting the Misoprostol, call the clinic.
 6. **DIARRHEA** – You may take over-the-counter Imodium following the manufacturer's instructions for relief of diarrhea.
 7. **TEMPERATURE** – Take your temperature 3 times a day (morning, afternoon and evening) until you return for your check up. If your temperature is 100.4 or higher for more than 4 hours, call the center.
 8. **PREGNANCY TISSUE** – Most women pass the pregnancy tissue within 8 hours of inserting misoprostol. The rest will generally pass the pregnancy within 24-48 hours. The embryo may be embedded in a blood clot or it may be more recognizable, depending on the length of pregnancy.
- **Definition of soaking:** filling a full size pad with fresh, bright red blood, from front to back, side to side – not including clots. If you hold the pad up, it will drip.

From Day of Mifeprex to Day 14

- **DO NOT** take Aspirin. You may take Tylenol or Ibuprofen.
- **DO NOT** take baths. Showers are okay.
- **DO NOT** lift anything heavy (over 25 lbs.) or engage in any strenuous activity (for at least one week).

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- **DO NOT** have vaginal sex until after your final appointment to avoid infection and pregnancy. If you are unable to abstain, USE A CONDOM FOR PROTECTION.
- **DO NOT** use tampons.
- **DO NOT** douche.
- **DO NOT** swim.
- **DO NOT** drink alcohol.
- **DO NOT** take any other prescription or non-prescription medicines (including herbal medicines or supplements) at any time during the treatment period without first asking your provider about them because they may interfere with the treatment.
- **DO** take your temperature and CALL the clinic if your temperature is greater than 100.4 for more than 4 hours or if there is an onset of fever more than 24 hours after inserting misoprostol.
- **DO** call immediately if you are experiencing severe abdominal pain or discomfort or general malaise, “feeling sick” (including weakness, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea) more than 24 hours after inserting misoprostol.
- **DO** try to take it easy. Listen to your body.
- **DO** return for your follow up appointment to make sure the abortion was complete. There is the possibility of a continued pregnancy even after bleeding and a likelihood of a continued pregnancy if there is no bleeding after inserting misoprostol.

If you are having a medical problem, call the clinic you were seen at as soon as the problem is present. Often times during the day a physician can see you at no additional charge.

*If you do call the 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 ½ hour; often times it will be within 15 minutes. If you have not received 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.

Quick List of Medications

MIFEPREX: one tablet is taken by mouth on the day of your appointment. The doctor will give this to you, and you will take it in the office.

AZITHROMYCIN: taken by mouth with food on the day of your appointment. You take all tablets with dinner at home. After this, you are done with Azithromycin.

MISOPROSTOL: four tablets are inserted vaginally at home 6 to 48 hours after Mifeprex. Insert all four tablets, one at a time, into your vagina. (*See Misoprostol Instructions on page two.*)

IBUPROFEN: one tablet is taken by mouth ½ hour before you take Misoprostol. You can continue to take one tablet every 6 hours or as needed for pain for the next couple of weeks.

TYLENOL #3 or NORCO: one or two tablets can be taken every 4 to 6 hours or as needed for pain. Start with two tablets at the first sign of cramping after inserting Misoprostol.

-Taking Care of Yourself - *Emotional Health*

Choosing to have an abortion is a normal experience. However, your *personal experience of abortion* is unique. Take comfort in knowing your feelings about your abortion are shared by millions of women. Emotions, and the meaning we ascribe to our experiences, are affected by many factors: religion, culture, gender, age, relationships and current life situations, among many other dynamics.

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 you had to review your decision. 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.

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- **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 he 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. Northland has referrals we can give you- call us. 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, *Imagine Counseling*, 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.ChoiceLinkUp.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 about 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.

We have found these Talk-Lines supportive:

www.all-options.org All Options - 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

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