Medical termination of pregnancy – at home

Information for women

This leaflet can be made available in other formats including large print, CD and Braille and in languages other than English, upon request.

Our staff understand that having a termination of pregnancy is a very difficult and emotional decision to make and they will support you and treat you with respect throughout. There is also a counsellor available, someone trained to listen and help you to make decisions, who can offer you support should you need it at any time.

Any personal information you give will be carefully protected although, if you are under 16 years we would recommend that you inform your parents or another supportive adult. Information will only be shared with the staff involved in your care and the only reason we would consider passing on confidential information without your permission, would be to protect you or someone else from serious harm.

Medical termination of pregnancy (MTOP) at home.

A medical termination of pregnancy has 2 stages, and means 3 visits to the hospital, over 3 - 5 working days.

Second clinic appointment/Stage 1

You will be seen by the doctor who will perform a scan to confirm how many weeks pregnant you are. You will be chaperoned by the nurse throughout this procedure. If you are sure you wish to proceed, your written consent will be obtained and the legal documentation completed.

You must be certain before going ahead with a medical termination, as the tablet alone could result in miscarriage or abnormality of the baby if the pregnancy is continued. If you are at all unsure about having your pregnancy terminated, please let your nurse know. If you need more time, another appointment will be arranged. You will be given time to make up your mind.

You will be asked to swallow a tablet (Mifepristone) which acts against progesterone, the hormone that supports an early pregnancy. If you are sick within 2 hours of taking this tablet, you will need to contact the clinic, or ward, and return for another tablet that day.

After taking this tablet you can go home and you will be given a time to attend the ward 48 hours later for Stage 2 of the procedure.

The days between visits can be spent in your normal way. You may get some period-like cramp pain and/or some light vaginal bleeding. Taking paracetamol according to the manufacturer’s instructions can help.
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Do not take tablets containing aspirin, mefenamic acid (Ponstan) or ibuprofen during the treatment, as they may increase your bleeding.

If you do have some bleeding you should use sanitary pads, not tampons, to reduce the risk of infection. Your bleeding may become heavy with clots and some pregnancy tissue may be passed. If you are over 7 weeks pregnant, you may be able to recognise the pregnancy tissue as the early development of a baby (embryo). (If you do pass clots and/or tissue, it would be helpful if you could bring them to the hospital with you (if this is not too distressing). If they contain pregnancy tissue you may not need any further treatment.

You are advised not to drink alcohol and to stop or reduce smoking during your treatment as this may increase bleeding.

If you have any worries or concerns, you can contact the ward at any time.

You need to make arrangements for a suitable adult to be with you throughout the second stage of the procedure and ensure you have access to a telephone and transport, in case you need to return to the hospital urgently.

Stage 2

You will attend the ward where the Pregnancy Advisory Clinic (PAC) nurse will place some tablets called Misoprostol in your vagina. These tablets will make your uterus (womb) start to contract. At the same time you will be offered an antibiotic suppository that is put into the rectum (back passage). This is to reduce the risk of infection.

Each woman's experience is different. A mild to strong period pain may be felt, together with vaginal bleeding, and then the pregnancy tissue is passed. Some women may have vomiting (being sick), diarrhoea, severe pain and heavy vaginal bleeding. Any diarrhoea usually stops as soon as your pregnancy tissue is passed. You will need to ensure that you have a supply of paracetamol at home to relieve any discomfort.

Before you go home, the PAC nurse will check your blood group and give you an injection of Anti-D if you are Rhesus negative. This is to protect future pregnancies. They will also check your urine and/or swab results and provide antibiotics if necessary. In addition, they will provide you with a supply of the oral contraceptive pill or contraceptive patch, if these are your chosen method of contraception, which you can commence once the pregnancy test is negative. You should not have sex until your pregnancy test is negative, because it is possible to become pregnant again before you see your next period. If your chosen method of future contraception is the coil, implant or Depo provera (injection), you will be provided with a supply of condoms, and then you will need to attend a Contraception and Sexual Health
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(CASH) clinic or your GP to get these. You will then be shown how to carry out a pregnancy test and provided with one, before being allowed home.

In most cases the pregnancy tissue is passed within 4 – 6 hours. Six hours after you have received the misoprostol, the PAC nurse will telephone you at home to assess your progress.

- If you have experienced pain and bleeding then no further treatment will be required at this time, and they will ask you to carry out the pregnancy test in 3 weeks and contact them with the result.

- If you have had no pain or bleeding after six hours, a further telephone assessment will be made in 24 – 48 hours. If, at this time, you have had pain and bleeding, you will be asked to carry out the pregnancy test in 3 weeks and contact staff with the result. If, on the other hand, you have still not had any pain or bleeding, they will arrange for you to have a scan in 1 week to see if you require further treatment.

If at any time you experience excessive pain and/ or heavy bleeding i.e. soaking pads every 30 minutes for 2 hours or more, then you must contact the ward straight away.

You must contact the ward if:

- your vaginal loss starts to smell
- you have a temperature over 37.5ºC (99.5ºF).

If you have any worries or concerns within the first 6 weeks do not hesitate to contact us (see contact numbers at the end of this leaflet).

Are there any risks and possible complications related to termination of pregnancy?

There are some risks and possible complications you need to consider before you agree you proceed.

These include:

- very heavy bleeding at the time of the procedure. This is rare, but can happen to 1 woman in every 1000 having a medical termination of pregnancy.¹

- post-termination infection. This can happen to 1 woman in every 10.² You will be offered an antibiotic suppository (tablet inserted into the rectum (back passage) allows the antibiotic to be absorbed into your bloodstream) before the procedure to reduce the risk of this happening.
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- **Incomplete evacuation of the uterus.** This means that some pregnancy tissue may have been left behind and further tests or treatment will be needed. This occurs in 5 women in every 100 undergoing MTOP.¹

- **Failed termination (ongoing pregnancy).** The procedure fails in 1 - 2 women in every 100.¹ If this happens further treatment will be needed.

- **Uterine perforation (making a hole in the womb).** This is rare, but can happen to 1 in every 1000 women having MTOP.² If this happens a laparotomy (open operation involving a cut in your tummy) would be required to check for, and repair, any organs, such as the bowel.

- **Rupture of Caesarean section scar.** This happens very rarely but would require an urgent laparotomy (open operation) involving an incision (cut) in the abdomen (tummy) to repair the scar or remove your womb, if the bleeding cannot be controlled.

- **Psychological (mental) distress.** This is common before and immediately after a termination. Only a small number of women have long-term distress.² If you do feel upset it often helps to talk to someone. Please ring your counsellor or PAC nurse.

- **Future pregnancies.** There is no evidence that following a medical termination of pregnancy, women suffer from subsequent ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside the womb), placenta praevia (low lying placenta) or infertility.¹ However, abortion is associated with a small increase in the risk of subsequent premature birth, which increases with the number of abortions.³

**Contact numbers**

**University Hospital of North Tees**

**Unit Counsellor**
telephone: 01642 624236
Monday - Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm

Non-urgent messages can be left on the answering machine.

**Pregnancy Advisory Clinic**
telephone for advice: 01642 624320
Appointment line only: 01642 624233

**Women’s Health Unit**
telephone: 01642 624597
24 hours a day, 7 days a week
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University Hospital of Hartlepool

Unit Counsellor
telephone: 01642 624236
Monday - Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm

Non-urgent messages can be left on the answering machine.

Pregnancy Advisory Clinic
Appointments and advice: 01429 522751

Women's Health Unit
telephone: 01642 624597
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Further information is available from:

Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists
27 Sussex Place
Regents Park
London.
NW1 4RG
telephone: 0207 772 6309
or at www.rcog.org.uk

NHS Choices
telephone: 111 (when it is less urgent than 999)
Calls to this number are free from landlines and mobile phones.
or via the website at www.nhs.uk

Specialist Stop Smoking Service
(incorporating Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton and Hartlepool)
telephone: 01642 383819
Monday - Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm

Useful addresses

Sexual Health Teesside – Central telephone number: 0300 330 1122

North Ormesby Health Village
11A Trinity Mews
North Ormesby
Middlesborough
TS3 6AL
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Redcar Primary Care Hospital
West Dyke Rd
Redcar
TS10 4NW

Hartlepool One Life
Park Road
Hartlepool
TS24 7PW

Lawson Street Health Centre
Lawson St
Stockton-on-Tees
TS18 1HU

C-Card scheme (free condoms for under 24 year olds)
Most local pharmacies in Teesside area

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) Teesside
Helen Britton House
telephone: 01642 516888

HIV Support Services
Terence Higgins Trust
telephone: 0808 802 1221

Domestic Violence Services
Harbour
telephone: 03000 20 25 25
www.facebook.com/harboursupportservices

My Sister’s Place
123 Borough Road
Middlesbrough
TS1 3AN
telephone: 01642 241864
hello@mysistersplace.co.uk
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References

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This leaflet has been produced in partnership with patients and carers. All patient leaflets are regularly reviewed, and any suggestions you have as to how it may be improved are extremely valuable. Please write to the Quality Assurance Team, University Hospital of North Tees or email: patientinformation@nth.nhs.uk

Comments, Concerns, Compliments or Complaints

We are continually trying to improve the services we provide.

We want to know what we’re doing well or if there’s anything which we can improve, that’s why the Patient Experience Team is here to help.

Our Patient Experience Team is here to try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible. If you would like to contact or request a copy of our PET leaflet, please contact:

    telephone: 01642 624719
    Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 4.00 pm
    Messages can be left on the answering machine and will be picked up throughout the day.

    freephone: 0800 092 0084
    Mobile: (can use text): 0779 506 1883
    Email: patientexperience@nth.nhs.uk

Out of hours if you wish to speak to a senior member of Trust staff, please contact the hospital switchboard who will bleep the appropriate person.

    telephone: 01642 617617
    24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Patient Experience Team is available to discuss your concerns in person Monday – Friday, 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm. The office is based on the ground floor at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Data Protection and use of patient information

The Trust has developed a Data Protection Policy in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All of our staff respect this policy and confidentiality is adhered to at all times. If you require further information please contact the Information Governance Team.

    telephone: 01642 833551 or email: information.governance@nth.nhs.uk

University Hospital of North Tees, Hardwick, Stockton-on-Tees. TS19 8PE
University Hospital of Hartlepool, Holdforth Road, Hartlepool. TS24 9AH

Telephone: 01642 617617               Fax: 01642 624089