



Clinical services

Telehealth

This booklet contains information about your abortion by telehealth (medical abortion). Read this information carefully and keep it to look at later on. Ask us if you have any questions after reading it.

Things to know:

Consent

- It is important that you understand the process, any risks, and that you are sure about your choice.
- Risks of medical abortion are described in the medical risks section.
- We will ask you to give your written consent to the process.
- It is important that you understand our fees and charges so you can give informed financial consent.

❗ If you do not understand anything in this booklet, you have any questions, or if you feel that you're being pressured or coerced, please let us know.

Interpreter services

To be eligible for abortion by telehealth, you must be able to speak and understand English without assistance. If you require an interpreter, please book an in-clinic appointment.

Accessibility statement

An accessible text version of this document is available online at [**msiaustralia.org.au**](https://msiaustralia.org.au)

Make a complaint or provide feedback

If you would like to provide any feedback, you can:

- talk to the person you are speaking with on the phone
- call our National Contact Centre on **1300 003 707**
- use our feedback form at [**msiaustralia.org.au**](https://msiaustralia.org.au)

If we don't satisfy your concerns, you may also escalate your complaint to the independent body in your state.

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What is an abortion by telehealth?

Abortion by telehealth, or teleabortion, is where you have consultations with a doctor over the phone instead of coming to a clinic.

You must begin a medical abortion by 9 weeks gestation, calculated from the first day of your last menstrual period, or by an ultrasound scan.

Whether you need an ultrasound to proceed will depend on information about this pregnancy, your medical history and your preference. The doctor will discuss this further during your first appointment.

 You must stay within 2 hours drive to 24-hour emergency medical care for the first 3 or 4 days of the medical abortion process. You need to be able to access a doctor, hospital or one of our clinics until the process is complete.

Do not travel overseas until we have confirmed the abortion is complete, which may be several weeks after treatment.

The abortion by telehealth process



You will usually have two appointments with a doctor

What do I need to do before my first appointment?

- Read this information booklet and make a note of any questions you might have.
- Write down the first day of your last menstrual period so that the doctor can estimate how pregnant you are.
- Complete the electronic intake form that will be emailed to you when you make your appointment.

What happens during my first doctor's appointment?

The doctor will talk to you by yourself during the first appointment.

- They will ask you about your decision and whether you are sure.
- They will ask about this pregnancy, previous pregnancies and your medical history.
- They will explain the treatment, any risks and the process for follow up.
- You can ask any questions you might have.
- Depending on your history, you may be able to proceed to book your second appointment without having an ultrasound. The doctor will discuss whether this is a safe option for you.
- If you need or prefer to have an ultrasound, we will send you a form to use anywhere that is convenient to you. Once we receive the report, you will book your second appointment.

You must not have this ultrasound any earlier than 6 weeks after the first day of your last menstrual period. This will help us determine if the pregnancy is in the uterus (womb), how many weeks pregnant you are and if you can continue with the abortion by telehealth process.

What happens during my second doctor's appointment?

- The doctor will talk to you about your decision, discuss any test results, and review the information given in the first appointment.
- They will review the treatment with you, including any risks.
- They will explain the follow up assessment, which differs depending on whether you have had an ultrasound or not. If you are proceeding without an ultrasound, you will need to have a blood test before and after the treatment. We will send the test forms to you.
- You can ask any questions you might have.
- You will also complete the consent to treatment form with the doctor.

Consent form

At the end of the second appointment and before we send you the medications, you will be asked to give your consent. **We will send you a link to the online consent form before or during your second doctor's appointment.**

- ! **Do not** complete the form before your appointment. The doctor will explain the form and help you complete it.

How do I get my medication?

There are two ways you can get your medication:

1. Delivery

- We can send the medication by courier to your home, a chosen address, or some parcel lockers (but not to a PO box).
- Delivery usually takes 1 to 3 business days.
- Someone will need to be there to sign for the package. If no one is home, it will be taken to the local post office to be collected.
- There are additional costs for delivery.

2. Local pharmacy

- We can send you an eScript (electronic prescription) for the medication, which you can take to a local pharmacy to collect.
- Not all pharmacies keep the abortion medicine (MS-2Step) in stock. It's a good idea to call ahead and check availability.
- If you choose this option, you'll pay the pharmacy directly for the medication. We won't charge you for it.

You will also be prescribed pain relief and anti-nausea medication. Your doctor will explain how and when to take them.

The medical abortion process

Medical abortion is a 2 step process. You will take 2 different tablets that work together to end the pregnancy.

Step 1 (mifepristone)

The first tablet you will take is called mifepristone. mifepristone is an anti-hormone. It will stop the hormone that is needed for a pregnancy to grow.

- This tablet is swallowed with water.
- Most people will not feel anything after taking this tablet, and can do their usual activities, however:
 - you may have some light bleeding and mild cramps during this time
 - you may have heavier bleeding, but this is not common.

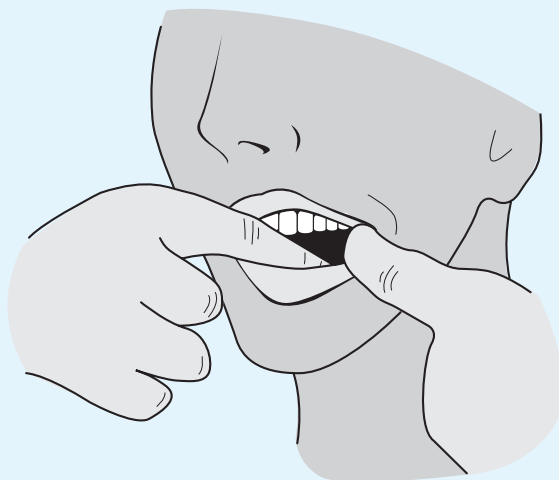
! If you are worried, you can call our free support line on **1300 888 022**.

You will begin Step 2 between 36 to 48 hours after Step 1. You should choose a time when you can be at home resting for **at least 6 hours**, and when you can have a support person with you.

Step 2 (misoprostol)

The second tablets you will take are called misoprostol. Misoprostol is a prostaglandin. This will make your uterus cramp and will make your cervix relax so the pregnancy can pass.

- You will have 4 tablets of misoprostol in your pack. You can take them at any time within **36 to 48 hours** of taking mifepristone (Step 1).
- Put the 4 misoprostol tablets into the pouch of your mouth between your gum and cheek and keep them there.
The tablets will go soft but may not completely dissolve; the medicine in the tablet will absorb through your cheek.
- After 30 minutes, you can swallow what is left in your mouth with some water.

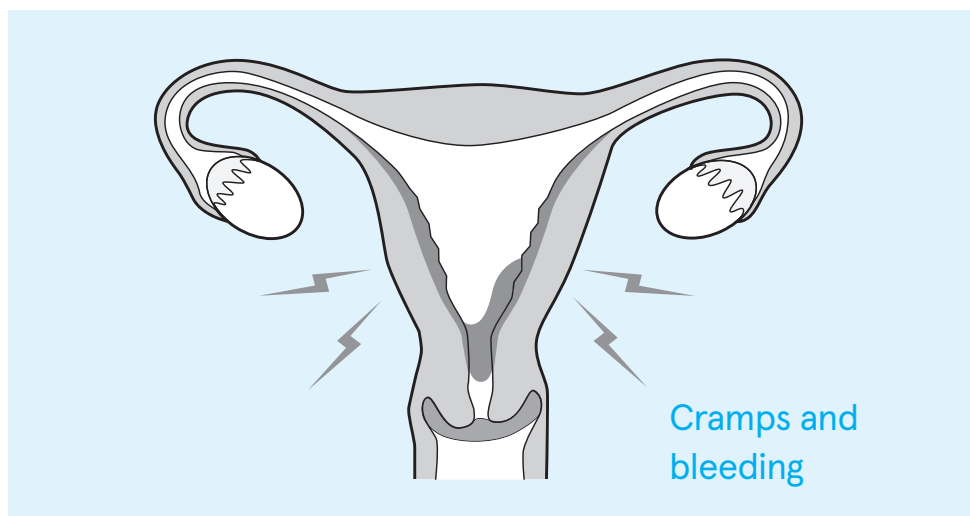


Tablets are
absorbed
through your
cheek

Between 30 minutes and 24 hours after taking misoprostol (usually within 4 to 6 hours) you may have the following:

- cramps in your uterus
- bleeding from your vagina
- start to pass the pregnancy.

! If you have not started bleeding within 24 hours, or have any concerns, please call our free support line on **1300 888 022**.



! If you do not want to continue with the medical abortion process at any stage please contact us on **1300 888 022**, as there are potential risks to the fetus from the medication.

After your treatment



What to expect during your medical abortion

These are some symptoms you will probably experience during your medical abortion. If you experience any of the uncommon symptoms or are worried about anything you're feeling, you can **call our free support line on 1300 888 022**.



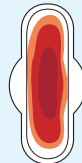
Bleeding

You will probably bleed more than your usual menstrual period. The bleeding should get lighter after the pregnancy has passed.

- You may also pass some clots, which can be different sizes.
- You can expect to have some moderate bleeding for around 2 weeks.
- You may have some light bleeding until your next period.



Small amount
Small stain on
maxipad within
1 hour



Average amount
Less than 15cm
stain on maxipad
within 1 hour



Light amount
Less than 10cm
stain on maxipad
within 1 hour



Heavy amount
Saturated maxipad
within 1 hour

! Call us if you experience very heavy bleeding, such as:

- soaking through a maxi-pad every 30 minutes for more than 2 hours
- passing clots larger than a tennis ball size
- heavy bleeding lasting more than 2 weeks.



Abdominal pain

Pain in your abdomen (lower tummy) is normal and can range from mild to strong. Pain should get better after the pregnancy has passed. Strong cramping does not usually last longer than 24 hours. If you have pain in your abdomen, there are some tips in the pain management section of this book.

! Call us if you have:

- strong cramping that does not get better with pain medication
- strong cramping for more than 24 hours
- concerns about your health.

Other side effects of medication

mifepristone (Step 1)
can cause:

- headache
- breast tenderness
- fainting
- hot flushes
- itching and rash.

These side effects **are not common**, but if you do experience them, they are usually mild.

misoprostol (Step 2)
can cause:

- nausea
- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- dizziness
- fever and chills.

These side effects **can be common**, but they usually don't last long.

Pain management

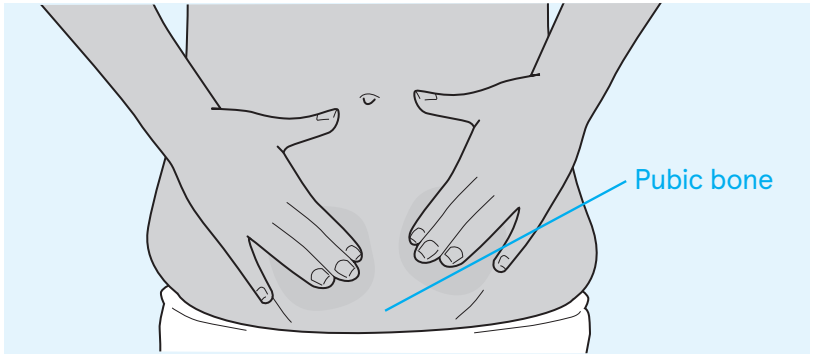
If you have pain, you can manage it with these methods.

Uterine massage

Frequent, firm massaging of your lower tummy area will help your uterus (womb) muscles, and can reduce bleeding and cramping. It can also help prevent blood clots.

- Lie on your back, sit on the toilet or in a comfortable position.
- Feel at the top of your pubic bone, press down firmly and massage in a downwards direction with your hand. You can use your fingertips, knuckles or the heel of your hand.

- Do this massage hourly for 3 minutes at a time, on the day of your abortion, then 5 times a day, or until your cramping/bleeding has stopped.
- If you have discomfort during the massage, don't stop the massage but take pain medication.



Heat therapy

You can put a hot water bottle, wheat bag or heat pack where the pain is.

- Do not apply heat directly to your skin.
- Always follow the product instructions.



Medication

You will be provided with pain medication for moderate or strong pain.

Follow the instructions given by your doctor, and do not take more than the recommended dose.

After your medical abortion



Reducing infection risk

To reduce the chances of infection, **do not** insert anything into your vagina for 1 week.

- This includes tampons, menstrual cups, fingers, or having vaginal intercourse.
- If you intend to use the vaginal ring or a diaphragm for contraception, please discuss this with the doctor at your appointment.

Possible signs of infection

These symptoms are not common and could mean you have an infection:

Fever

Feeling tired and run-down

Feeling generally unwell or flu-like symptoms

Ongoing abdominal (lower tummy) pain

Unusual vaginal discharge

If you experience any of these symptoms more than 24 hours after taking misoprostal (Step 2), **call us on 1300 888 022**.



Pregnancy symptoms

If you had nausea (feeling sick) before your treatment, it will probably get better within 24 hours of completing the treatment.

- Breast fullness or tenderness can last for 1 to 2 weeks. Do not squeeze or massage your breasts.
- A home pregnancy test will sometimes remain positive a month after a medical abortion.

! Call us on 1300 888 022 if you are concerned about continuing pregnancy symptoms.



Menstruation

You should get your first menstrual period 4 to 8 weeks after your treatment; however some contraceptive methods may change this.

! Call us on 1300 888 022 if your period has not come in this time.



Exercise

As soon as you feel well enough, you can do your normal activities and exercise.



Returning to work


You may be able to have a medical abortion without any, or little, interruption to work.

! You need to be resting at home for Step 2, until cramping and bleeding have reduced.

- If you have a physically demanding job, you may want to take some time off.
 - When you feel better you can go back to work.
 - Remember to ask for a medical certificate during your appointment. Your support person can also ask for a medical certificate.
-

Follow up

It is essential to make sure the medical abortion has worked.

- If you had blood tests before and after your medical abortion, unless you hear from us, you'll only need to complete a simple self-assessment to check that the abortion was successful and there are no complications. We'll email the self-assessment to you. Please complete it 14 to 21 days after taking Step 1.
 - If you didn't have blood tests, we will post you a special urine pregnancy test to use at home. This should be done 14 to 21 days after taking Step 1. You'll also complete a self-assessment at the same time to check that the abortion was successful and there are no complications.
 - If you need further assessment we may refer you for blood tests or an ultrasound, make an appointment for you at one of our clinics, if convenient, or ask you to see your local health practitioner.
-  **Do not** travel overseas until you have confirmed your treatment has been successful.

Medical risks



Medical abortion is very safe, but like any medical treatment, has some risks. These risks do not include all complications, but are the most common or serious.

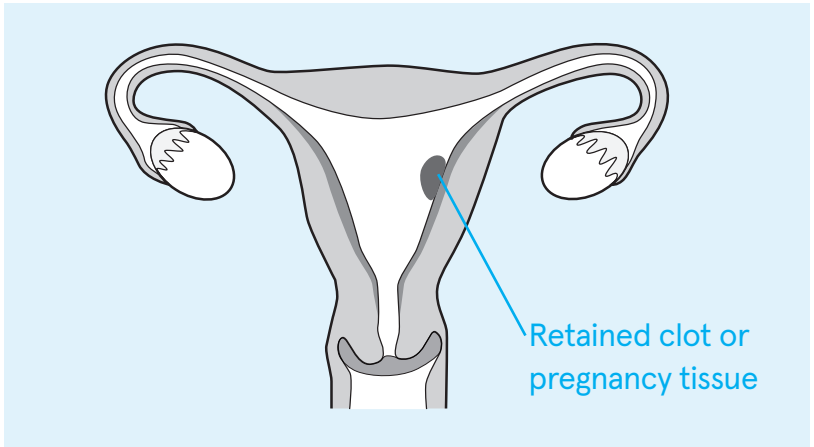


Occurring
in up to
4 in 100
people

Retained pregnancy tissue or clot

What is it: A small amount of tissue may stay in the uterus, or blood may collect and form a clot. This can cause heavy and/or long lasting bleeding and/or pain.

Action/treatment: May require more tablets or a surgical procedure. There may be additional costs if this is required.





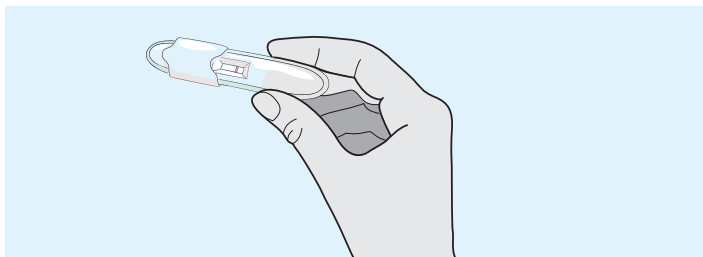
Occurring
in 1 in 100
people

Continuing pregnancy

What is it: The pregnancy remains and may continue to grow.

Action/treatment: May need a repeat medical abortion or a surgical procedure. There may be additional costs if this is required.

❗ If you have a continuing pregnancy and decide to keep the pregnancy, the medication may have damaged the fetus.

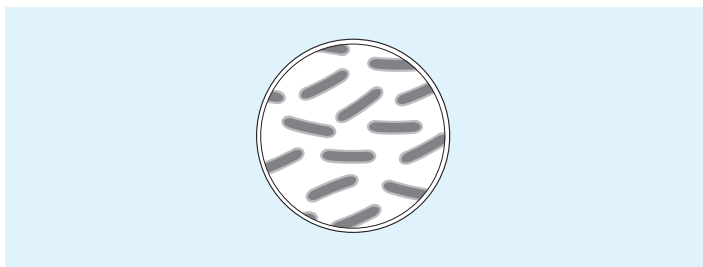


Occurring
in less
than
1 in 100
people

Infection

What is it: When bacteria enters the body and can cause disease. This is uncommon and serious infection from abortion is rare.

Action/treatment: You may need further tests and antibiotics to treat infection.





1 to 2 in
100 people
needing
surgery

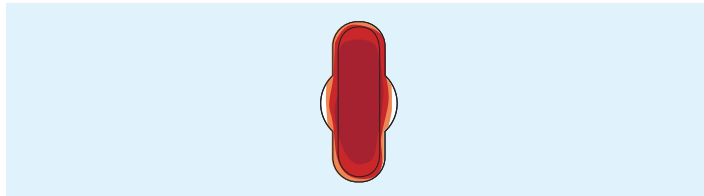


1 to 2 in
1,000
people
needing
a blood
transfusion

Haemorrhage

What is it: Excessive or prolonged bleeding.

Action/treatment: You may need further surgery, intravenous fluids or a blood transfusion at a local hospital.



Effect on future pregnancies

An uncomplicated medical abortion will not affect your chance of becoming pregnant in the future.

Ectopic pregnancy

In rare cases, a pregnancy can develop outside the uterus (womb), such as in the tubes. This is known as an ectopic pregnancy.

It's important to be extra cautious about an ectopic pregnancy if you've had a medical abortion without an ultrasound, or an ultrasound did not confirm an intrauterine pregnancy.

Be aware of the following signs and symptoms:

- severe abdominal pain (especially on one side)
- shoulder pain
- heavy vaginal bleeding
- feeling faint or weak

If you experience any of these symptoms, go to the Emergency Department of your nearest hospital immediately.

Emotional effects

Everyone has different feelings about their own treatment. There is no right or wrong way to feel after your abortion. If at any time you would like to talk to someone, we provide free counselling services. Simply book online or call us on **1300 003 707** to make a booking.

If the pregnancy was a result of sexual, family or domestic violence, you can also call **1800 Respect**. They offer 24/7 information, counselling and support at **1800 737 732** or you can chat online at **1800respect.org.au**

Contraception and aftercare



We will give you information about your contraception options

Contraception options

Within just 2 weeks of your treatment, your body can release an egg; so it's possible to fall pregnant again before your next period. This is why we strongly suggest starting contraception as soon as possible if you don't want to become pregnant.

Visit msiaustralia.org.au for further information and fact sheets on different contraceptive methods.

! You can take an online contraception quiz at contraception.org.au



Contraception after your medical abortion

In most cases you can start a contraceptive method immediately. If you have chosen an IUD this can be inserted as soon as we have confirmed your abortion is complete. Speak with your GP or local women's health centre if you are unable to attend one of our clinics.

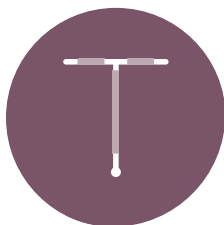
- Long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) options (e.g. IUDs, implants, injections) are the most effective at preventing pregnancy.
 - You can start contraception such as the contraceptive pill or vaginal ring the day after Step 2 of treatment (misoprostol) and these methods will be effective immediately.
- ! No matter which contraception you use, you should not have vaginal intercourse for **1 week** after your treatment.



Hormonal IUD



Implant



Copper IUD



Injection

Free aftercare line

Our aftercare phone service connects you to experienced registered nurses.

Call our aftercare nurses on 1300 888 022 if you experience any of the following problems or have any concerns:

- passing clots larger than a tennis ball size
- heavy bleeding that lasts longer than 2 weeks
- soaking a maxi pad every 30 minutes for more than 2 hours
- fever, chills, strong pain or other side effects which continue more than 24 hours after taking Step 2 (misoprostol)
- having strong abdominal pain that doesn't stop
- feeling nauseous more than 1 week after your treatment
- feeling tired or generally unwell
- having sore breasts for 2 weeks after your treatment
- not menstruating as usual by 6 to 8 weeks after your treatment
- persistent pregnancy symptoms.



Your Healthcare Rights

MSI Australia adopts the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights. The Charter provides a framework of client rights which allows clients, families, carers and services providing health care to work together towards a safe and high quality health system, achieving the best possible outcomes.

The Charter is guided by the following principles:

Access
Safety
Respect
Partnership
Information
Privacy
Give feedback



As a client of MSI Australia, you have a right to:

- be treated in a professional, courteous and caring manner
- be respected regardless of your gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion and cultural and linguistic diversity
- have your concerns, complaints and suggestions taken seriously.

If we don't satisfy your concerns, you may also escalate your complaint to the independent body in your State.

For more information about your healthcare rights and the Charter, head to safetyandquality.gov.au or scan the QR code



Call us if you experience any of the following problems or have any concerns:

- passing clots larger than a tennis ball size
 - heavy bleeding that lasts longer than 2 weeks
 - soaking a maxi pad every 30 minutes for more than 2 hours
 - fever, chills, strong pain or other side effects which continue more than 24 hours after taking Step 2 (misoprostol)
 - having strong abdominal pain that doesn't stop
 - feeling nauseous more than 1 week after your treatment
 - feeling tired or generally unwell
 - having sore breasts for 2 weeks after your treatment
 - not menstruating as usual by 6 to 8 weeks after your treatment
 - persistent pregnancy symptoms.
-

Call us IMMEDIATELY if you have possible signs of an infection:

- fever
 - feeling generally unwell (flu like symptoms)
 - ongoing abdominal pain
 - unusual vaginal discharge.
-

Our free aftercare phone service: **1300 888 022**



Care and support before, during and after your procedure

**Call us on 1300 003 707 for any questions
about your appointment.**

**For medical concerns call our
Aftercare line 1300 888 022.**

msiaustralia.org.au