

Information for Patients

Termination of Pregnancy before 24 Weeks Gestation for Fetal Abnormality

You have been offered a termination for a condition that has arisen in your pregnancy. This is a written copy of information for you to keep, about the drugs you will be given to induce labour. Please keep it carefully. We will of course be happy to answer any questions you may have.

How does the medication work?

You will be given two different drugs that work together to cause a miscarriage. Mifepristone works by blocking the action of progesterone, a hormone needed in pregnancy. It is used in combination with a type of hormone, misoprostol, which is administered vaginally two days later.

Is it safe?

Many women world wide have used this treatment. It has proved to have a very good safety record. However every form of medical treatment has some risk or side effect. With this treatment, the main risks, although small, are excessive vaginal bleeding or infection. These are usually treated easily.

If you have had previous surgery on your womb (e.g. Caesarean section) then the doctor will discuss this with you.

If you have had any serious medical problems, please discuss these with the doctor to ensure that the treatment is suitable for you.

How will I take the tablets?

You will be given the Mifepristone tablet to swallow. If all is well you can leave and we will ask you to return to the hospital two days later to start the process of delivery. If you vomit within two hours of leaving the hospital please telephone the ward as the drug may not work.

There is a chance that, prior to returning to the hospital, your uterus (womb) may start to contract. A few women may deliver at home. You may experience crampy period pains and/or vaginal bleeding. Light bleeding and mild pain is not uncommon. You should use a sanitary pad, not tampon, and take paracetamol if necessary. If you experience severe pain or heavy bleeding you should ring Cley ward.

CLEY WARD Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital (01603 287 242)

Your return visit

Two to three days after you have taken the tablet you will be asked to attend the hospital. If you have had any problems, mention them now. If all is well, treatment will continue. You will be given a vaginal pessary (misoprostol). You will be given more misoprostol orally during the day.

Misoprostol causes the uterus (womb) to contract. You should expect vaginal bleeding and some pain which will peak at the time of the delivery. In due course you will pass the fetus and afterbirth. If you feel sick or need painkillers please tell us: we can try to relieve this for you.

You may be able to go home the same day you are admitted, but some women do not deliver until that night or occasionally the next day. You should anticipate being in hospital overnight.

Complications are uncommon but include the placenta not being completely expelled, smaller tissue fragments remaining in the womb, bleeding or infection. These may require further treatment, possibly a minor operation (a scrape of the womb) under general anaesthetic.

You may need to be examined internally before you go home.

It is the policy of the Trust to bury fetuses with dignity. However alternative options can be offered. Please ask a member of staff for further details.

What to expect afterwards

You can expect to bleed and have period type pain for up to six weeks. If you bleed heavily, have strong pelvic pains, or a fever, telephone Cley Ward for advice. You will need to take things easy for a while.

If your pregnancy was advanced, your breasts could fill with milk. As this can be uncomfortable and upsetting, we would offer medication to prevent this.

People feel a great variety of emotions following their loss. Bereavement support is available through the chaplaincy and other relevant groups. You will be informed of these and how to contact them if you wish.

Follow up appointment

We would offer you the opportunity to discuss the loss of your baby. Your Consultant will arrange an appointment with you at 6 to 12 weeks.

