



# Medical Termination

## What is it?

A medical termination uses medication to end a pregnancy. It is a safe and effective method for pregnancies up to nine weeks gestation. Women may have a medical termination due to an unintended pregnancy or because pregnancy complications require a termination.

## What do I need to do to prepare?

There is nothing you need to do to prepare for a medical termination.

A termination can be stressful and upsetting, especially if this is happening because of pregnancy complications. Think about who can support you during this time and consider taking time off work or study.

You may want to talk to your GP about a referral to a counsellor or contact the following support lines:

- Family Planning NSW: **1300 658 886**
- Pregnancy Counselling Australia: **1300 737 732**

## What will happen?

The doctor will go through your medical history. They may also do an ultrasound.

### Stage One

You will be given a medication called mifepristone. This stops the body from sustaining a pregnancy. There are usually no physical side effects, but some women experience some bleeding. If you are being given a medical termination because of a miscarriage, the service will skip this medication and move straight to stage two.

### Stage Two

You will be given a second medication to take at home 24 to 48 hours after the first. This medication is called misoprostol. This will cause you to experience something similar to a miscarriage.

Most women will experience bleeding and cramping in the first four hours. Strong cramping may be felt for the first 24 hours. 90 percent of women will have expelled all pregnancy tissue in the first 24 hours. Most women describe it as more than a normal period.

If no bleeding has occurred in the first 24 hours, contact the clinic as you may need a second dose.

If the cramping is painful, you can use over the counter pain medication. Your doctor may have prescribed something for the pain as well.

## Protect yourself from distress

*Some women may see greyish pregnancy tissue during the bleeding*

*For women close to nine weeks gestation, you may see the embryo, sac or placenta in the toilet or on a sanitary napkin. This can be very distressing*

*It is recommended that you wrap up your sanitary pads in toilet paper without looking inside and flushing the toilet before you get up to avoid seeing anything that may distress you*

## When should I be concerned?

If you have very heavy bleeding, fever or pain that isn't improving, seek medical help from the service that provided the termination, your GP or your local hospital Emergency Department

## What can I expect after?

Light bleeding may last up to two weeks. This is normal.

You will need to have a check-up about two weeks after the medical termination. You may also need to have a urine or blood test or an ultrasound. This is to check all the pregnancy tissue has been expelled. If this is confirmed, the doctor may talk to you about future contraception options if this was an unplanned pregnancy.

Medical terminations are successful 95 percent of the time. However, some women will need a surgical procedure to complete the termination or deal with ongoing or heavy bleeding.



## What questions could I ask my doctor?

- Where can I access support?*
- Should I take time off while taking the medication?*
- How will I know that it has been successful?*
- How do I manage any pain?*
- How long should the bleeding last?*
- How can I prevent another unplanned pregnancy?*



## Where can I learn more?

- **Children by Choice** - medication abortion: [childrenbychoice.org.au](http://childrenbychoice.org.au)
- **Marie Stopes Australia** - medical abortion: [mariestopes.org.au](http://mariestopes.org.au)