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**Patient information**

# Preparing for an abortion



You are coming to our clinic for an abortion. This brochure explains what to expect during your visit and how to prepare.

### **What to bring**

Always bring your ID and a recent medication list (if applicable). If you choose a surgical abortion, also bring a nightgown or long T-shirt, slippers, socks or flip-flops, and an extra set of underwear.

### **Upon arrival**

Upon arrival, please check in at the reception desk. The receptionist will ask for valid identification and register you. You will be given a questionnaire to complete, which you can fill in while waiting in the waiting room. Please return the completed questionnaire to the reception desk. Wait in the waiting room until the doctor calls you. Please be aware that you may have to wait a little longer. Therefore, do not schedule other appointments too close to your appointment with us.

## **Payment**

If you have Dutch health insurance or if you work in the Netherlands, an abortion is usually free of charge.

If you are not insured in the Netherlands, you will need to go to the counter to pay for the treatment. If you want an IUD inserted, you will also pay for it at the counter before the procedure.

## **Consultation with the doctor**

The doctor wants to speak to you privately, without partner or companion. This is to ensure that the decision to have an abortion is your own. It also gives you the opportunity to discuss things you don't want to share with your partner or companion.

The doctor will review the questionnaire with you and ask additional questions about your health. She will then perform an ultrasound, usually on your abdomen but sometimes transvaginally.

After the ultrasound, the doctor will discuss the various treatment options with you. Once you have both agreed on the treatment and all your questions have been answered, you will return to the waiting room.

## **Consultation with the nurse**

The nurse will collect you from the waiting room. If you wish, your partner or companion may join this conversation. The nurse will ask you how your conversation with the doctor went and give you the opportunity to discuss any doubts you may have about your decision. The nurse will also ask questions that are required by the government for the National Abortion Registry.

## Medical abortion

If you have chosen the abortion pill, the nurse will explain this medication to you. She will also tell you what to expect and when to contact the clinic. You will then take the first pill (Mifegyne) with the nurse. You will be given the other four pills (Cytotec) to take home.

## Surgical abortion

If you are having a vacuum aspiration or a surgical abortion, the nurse will explain the rest of the day. The nurse will then take you to the ward.

If you are more than 9 weeks pregnant, you will be given Cytotec pills to dissolve under your tongue. This softens the cervix, making the procedure go more smoothly. The time it takes for the pills to dissolve, as well as the number of pills you receive, depends on the duration of the pregnancy.

## Contraception

You can become pregnant again immediately after an abortion. If you want to reduce the risk, consider contraception before your procedure.

During the procedure, you can often have an IUD or a hormonal implant (Implanon) placed. You can also start taking the contraceptive pill, patch (Evra), and ring immediately. Don't wait until the bleeding has stopped.

If you want to have an Implanon or IUD placed later, you can do so after the pregnancy test is negative again.

## On the ward

The nurse will take you to the changing room to change. You must also remove all your jewelry here. When you are ready, the nurse will show you to a bed or chair.

The nurse will now insert an intravenous cannula. This is a flexible plastic tube that is inserted into a blood vessel. The intravenous cannula allows the nurse to easily administer medication before, during, or after the treatment. Sometimes the nurse will need to know your blood type or iron levels. These samples can be taken from the intravenous cannula.

Are you afraid of needles? Discuss this with the nurse during your consultation. Our nurses have extensive experience in this area and will ensure that you experience minimal discomfort during the IV insertion.

Once all the preparations for the treatment are complete, you will wait for your turn. Sometimes this happens very quickly, but on some days it can take longer. You are, of course, welcome to use your phone (no phone calls or video calls) or read a book. If you have any questions or concerns, you can always contact the nurse.

Just before the treatment, it is important that you urinate again, even if you feel you don't need to.

## During the treatment

The doctor will collect you for your procedure, which will take place in the treatment room. There, the doctor will ask you questions to verify some important information.

If you have chosen to sleep during the treatment (general sedation), the nurse will administer medication through the intravenous cannula, and will also monitor you closely throughout the treatment. If you have chosen for general sedation, you are not allowed to participate in traffic (driving a car, bicycle or scooter) in the 24 hours after the procedure.

If you prefer to remain awake during the treatment, you will receive a local anesthetic. This is done through injections into the cervix. The uterus itself cannot be anesthetized. You can also choose to receive additional pain relief through an IV. If you choose this option, you will not be allowed to drive for 24 hours.

There will also be someone present to perform an ultrasound during the treatment and to support the doctor.

## After the treatment

After the treatment, you will return to the ward in a bed. Here you can recover and wake up gently. You will be given something to drink, and if you feel well enough, you can eat something at the table.

The nurse will examine your abdomen and check for any bleeding. You will also be given antibiotics to minimize the risk of infection. When you feel well, you can go home.

### Seeing the tissue

If you would like to see the pregnancy tissue, please inform the doctor or nurse before the procedure.

## Emotions

Sometimes an abortion can be a difficult decision. After treatment, you may feel relieved and feel like you made the right choice. But you may also experience feelings of guilt, shame, or regret or all these emotions together. This is normal.

If you find it difficult to cope with these emotions, you can get help. Your GP can help, or we can refer you to a therapist with extensive experience in this area.

# Contact

The clinic can be reached by phone from Monday to Friday, from 8:30 AM to 4:45 PM, to schedule an appointment or for more information about treatment or costs.

## Questions?

Call: +31 85 822 07 98

