

Your choice

You may have the option of choosing between medication and surgical abortion, depending on a number of factors including your location, the gestation of your pregnancy, your medical history and your personal preference.

Generally speaking

If you:

- feel comfortable with the idea of having a miscarriage at home
- live or can stay within two hours of a major centre for 5 days
- would like to avoid a surgical operation
- don't mind more than one appointment
- are less than nine weeks pregnant

Then medical abortion may be suitable for you

If you:

- prefer to complete the abortion in a single visit
- are willing to wait for a spot on the surgical list (usually less than 14 days' wait)
- prefer not to be conscious for the procedure
- can access a service which provides a surgical abortion
- feel comfortable with having a surgical procedure and anaesthetic

Then surgical abortion may be suitable for you

If you or someone you know is pregnant unexpectedly, we can help you with:

- information about all your options, including abortion, adoption and parenting
- unbiased counselling by qualified health practitioners
- abortion services free of charge for Medicare card holders
- Post abortion contraceptive choices
- financial assistance for contraceptive access (if you fit our eligibility criteria)

We can organise an interpreter for you if you need one

We are qualified professionals who are pro-choice, non-judgemental, and committed to supporting you with all your pregnancy options.

Our services are free of charge for Medicare card holders, costs involved for non Medicare clients.

You can call us on (08) 8948 0144

Coconut Grove clinic

Unit 2 The Clock Tower, Dick Ward Drive

9am to 4pm Monday - Friday

9am to 12pm on Saturdays.

Palmerston

Palmerston Health Precinct

9am-4pm Wednesday and Thursday

www.fpwnt.com.au

Choosing Abortion



Information for people considering medical or surgical abortion



Medical abortion explained

Medical abortion occurs after taking tablets prescribed by a doctor to start a miscarriage.

Medical abortion usually requires more than one medical appointment, and is available up to 9 weeks (or 63 days since the first day of your last period).

Before you are prescribed the medication you'll be assessed to see if this method is safe for you. This will include an ultrasound to check how far along your pregnancy is, a urine or swab test for STIs and may also include blood tests.

The abortion process involves two medications, taken 36 to 48 hours apart. After taking the second medication, your symptoms will begin. Cramping, pain and bleeding (similar to period pain but more severe) occur as a normal part of the process, just like a spontaneous miscarriage. This generally lasts around 8 hours. Most people continue to bleed (similar to a period) for up to two weeks afterwards. Family Planning NT provides pain relief medication.

You will need to attend a follow up appointment afterwards to ensure the process is complete.

Possible side effects or complications

In 5% of cases the medications may not result in a complete abortion, and a surgical follow up may be required. Side effects of the medications can include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, chills or fever.

Complications with medical abortion are rare but may include excessive bleeding or infection.

It is essential that you follow the after care instructions given to you by your doctor.

Surgical abortion explained

A surgical abortion is a simple surgical procedure, removing the pregnancy tissue using gentle suction. Surgical abortion is provided at some public hospitals in the NT.

In preparation for a surgical abortion, you will be assessed at the clinic to see if this method is safe for you. This includes a blood test and ultrasound to check how far along your pregnancy is.

Surgical abortions performed up to 12-13 weeks of pregnancy typically require a single clinic visit lasting 3 to 5 hours in total, which includes pre and post-operative care. For abortions after 13 weeks, the operation will take longer as different procedures and pre-operative medications may be used.

A partner or support person can usually accompany you to the hospital and possibly attend some of the consultation with you, but they are unable to stay with you through the entire process.

You must have someone pick you up from the hospital after the procedure, as you will have been under anaesthetic

Possible side effects or complications

Any surgery carries some risk of complications, but abortion is one of the safest and most commonly performed surgical procedures in Australia. On very rare occasions, complications may occur. The hospital should fully inform you of the risks before the procedure.

After the anaesthetic, it is usual to feel drowsy or vague. You're advised not to drive for at least 24 hours and it is a requirement that a support person be available to take you home after the procedure. It is essential that you follow the instructions the hospital gives you to minimise the risk of infection.

General issues for consideration

Health

Abortion in Australia is very safe when provided by a medical professional, and both medication and surgical methods have similarly low rates of complications. Having an abortion will not affect your ability to become pregnant or carry a pregnancy to term in the future.

Emotional wellbeing

It is uncommon for people to experience ongoing emotional problems after an abortion if they have been supported to make their own choice about a pregnancy without judgement or coercion. If you are not feeling sure about your decision or have any questions, it might be helpful to seek out unbiased, all options professional counselling.

Cost

Abortion is provided for free in the Northern Territory if you have a Medicare card.

If you don't have a Medicare card:

A medical abortion will be between \$750-\$1000 depending on the tests required. A surgical abortion will be around \$3000.

Some private health or travel insurance funds will provide reimbursement, check with your insurer.

Location

In the Northern Territory, surgical abortions are only available in the major centres. Medical abortions can be provided within two hours' driving distance from a major centre. Medication abortion via telehealth may also be an option for people who live within two hours of a hospital.