



Medication to help your miscarriage happen at home

1. This information will help you decide whether to manage your miscarriage at home

You will be receiving this information because it has been confirmed that you have had a miscarriage. There are many names for this but they all mean that your baby has not developed or has stopped developing.

2. What happens next?

Your doctor will have discussed the treatment options for your miscarriage with you. The options are:

- Waiting for your miscarriage to occur naturally
- Having an operation to remove the pregnancy tissue – this is called an “Evacuation of the uterus”. Sometimes people call it a “D&C”
- Taking some medicine to help the miscarriage to happen at home.

Previously an operation was regarded as the best option but now with better medicine it is considered safer to avoid an operation and use tablets to induce the miscarriage at home.. Your doctor will discuss the benefits and risks of the operation and tablets with you.

3. Inducing a miscarriage with Misoprostol

Misoprostol is a medicine which causes a miscarriage by softening the cervix (opening to your womb) and making the uterus (womb) contract to pass the pregnancy tissue. It can start working from about 30 minutes after the tablets have been taken and will cause cramping pain and bleeding. It works well in up to 85% of women.

You will be asked to read an information leaflet about Misoprostol and to sign a consent form prior to taking the medication

3.1 Advantages

- Your miscarriage will most likely occur at home
- You are less likely to need an anaesthetic or an operation
- The blood loss is about the same as an operation

3.2 Disadvantages

- The medicine is a good option for most women. About 15% of women may still need to have an operation
- Sometimes there is a delay in passing the pregnancy tissue which slightly increases your chance of an infection
- There may be some side effects of the medication but these do not last long. Diarrhoea is the most common side effect but nausea, vomiting and slight fever may also occur.

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Misoprostol is not recommended if you:

- are bleeding heavily,
- have a high fever or other signs suggesting an infection
- have an intrauterine contraceptive device (IUD or coil) fitted
- are very unwell or have had a serious illness
- have a molar pregnancy (this is very rare)
- have had more than two previous miscarriages
- are breastfeeding

4. Taking the Misoprostol

1. A doctor will discuss the treatment with you, including its benefits and possible side-effects. Ask the doctor any questions if you are not sure about anything.
2. You will be asked to sign a consent form saying you understand the treatment and that the benefits and risks have been explained to you.
3. The nurse will take your blood pressure, pulse and temperature and assess any pain you may be having. You may be offered some Paracetamol (for pain relief) or medicine to prevent any feelings of nausea/sickness that can be caused by the misoprostol.
4. You will be given the Misoprostol tablets to take. Depending on your symptoms you may be asked to stay in hospital for observation.
5. If you are going home, you will need to stay in hospital for 30 minutes afterwards to check you are not having a reaction to the medication.
6. After 30 minutes you may go home if you are feeling well.
7. You will be given a script for pain relief before you go.

5. What will happen when I miscarry?

- You will experience cramping pains that can be quite severe for a short period of time, take pain relief as you need but don't exceed the dose stated on the box or label.
- Vaginal bleeding may be heavy for about 2-3 hours, and you will pass some pregnancy tissue and clots. You may see a pregnancy sac or an embryo (small baby). This is normal but can be distressing for some women.
- After you have passed the pregnancy tissue, the pain and bleeding will settle quickly but you are likely to experience period type pain for 3 or 4 days and bleeding for up to two weeks.

6. Follow up - Day 3 phone call

Two days after you have had the Misoprostol you will receive a phone call from the Early Pregnancy clinic nurse or doctor. If you have had little or no bleeding or you don't think you have passed the pregnancy tissue you will be offered the chance to come to the Early Pregnancy Clinic for a second dose of Misoprostol.

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7. Follow up - Day 7 phone call

Seven days after the medication you will receive a telephone call from the Early Pregnancy clinic nurse or doctor. If you haven't passed the pregnancy tissue or your symptoms are not settling you will be asked to come to the Early Pregnancy Clinic to discuss further options with the Doctor.

If you have passed the pregnancy tissue and your bleeding and pain are settling the Early Pregnancy clinic doctor or nurse will call you again in one week.

8. Follow up - Day 14 phone call

Two weeks after the medication you will receive a telephone call from the Early Pregnancy clinic nurse or doctor. If you have stopped or nearly stopped bleeding, you will be discharged from hospital follow-up. If you continue to have on-going symptoms you will be asked to come to the Early Pregnancy Clinic to be seen by a doctor.

9. If things don't appear to be going well or you are worried

Phone the Early Pregnancy Clinic nurse on 021 243 9729 Monday to Friday between 9am – 4pm if you are worried about the symptoms you are having. Please take this hand-out with you.

Go to Emergency Department if you:

- have heavy bleeding that is not settling down, for example you are soaking sanitary pads every hour for more than 3 hours
- you are feeling unwell (lightheaded, dizzy or faint)
- you have pain that is not relieved by regular pain medication

See your family doctor if you have a fever, flu like symptoms, or a smelly discharge

10. General Advice

- Let someone know what is happening and that you may need support during this time
- You should wear sanitary pads NOT tampons
- Do not go swimming in the ocean, in a swimming pool or spa pool until the bleeding has completely stopped
- Avoid sexual intercourse and do not put anything into your vagina until the bleeding has completely stopped

Counseling and Further information

Everybody reacts differently to a miscarriage, some are sad, some angry, some relieved, some all of these things. It is important to accept your feelings, whatever they are. If you would like to talk about your miscarriage you can:

- Phone a Women's Health Social Worker at North Shore Hospital via the hospital operator on 486 8900.
- Visit the Miscarriage Support Group website www.miscarriagesupport.org.nz
- Phone the Miscarriage Support Group support line – phone 378 4060

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