

## Patient information factsheet

# Using misoprostol tablets at home

Your doctor or nurse will have already talked to you about using misoprostol tablets at home. This factsheet provides you with some further information about how to use the tablets and what to expect, and who to contact if you have concerns or queries at any time.

### How to use the tablets

As your doctor or nurse will have explained, the misoprostol tablets need to be inserted into your vagina.

We recommend you insert them in the morning and, if possible, have someone at home with you.

When you are ready to insert the tablets, you should pass urine first, then wash your hands and lie on the bed or sofa.

Insert the four tablets into your vagina, as high up as you can. Put on a sanitary towel and lie down for an hour if possible. This will allow time for the tablets to be absorbed.

### What to expect

The misoprostol is likely to cause you to have cramps and bleed quite heavily.

Pain and bleeding may start within an hour of having the misoprostol, but for some people it may take longer.

Bleeding may be heavy and there may be some moderate sized clots. You will need to wear extra absorbent sanitary towels and these should be changed frequently.

It is not unusual to soak 2-4 pads in the first hour. However, if you continue to bleed heavily for 2 hours, we would advise you to seek advice (see below).

Some women are concerned about what they will see in their sanitary towel, on the toilet paper or in the toilet once the misoprostol takes effect. You may see the sac in which the early pregnancy is developing, but you are unlikely to see a recognisable baby as it is still very early in the pregnancy.

Most women experience strong cramps whilst the bleeding is heavy, but these should settle within 12 hours or once pregnancy tissue is passed. We advise you to use pain relief medication such as paracetamol and codeine but not aspirin.

Heavy bleeding will hopefully settle within 48 hours. Lighter bleeding may then last for up to two weeks.

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## Side effects

Some women experience side effects from the misoprostol. These may include nausea/sickness and diarrhoea, but these should settle within 2-4 hours.

You will be given some anti-sickness tablets and pain relief medication dispensed from the EPU (early pregnancy unit).

If you have any concerns during this time you can contact us on the numbers below or alternatively speak to your GP.

## When to seek advice

- **If you experience heavy bleeding (you are soaking 2-4 sanitary pads in an hour for more than 2 hours) and/or you feel unwell or faint** you should seek advice by calling the early pregnancy unit (EPU) or Bramshaw ward on the numbers below.
- **If the bleeding is very heavy (meaning you need to constantly change pads)** you should seek urgent medical assistance and consider visiting the emergency department.

## Who to contact

If you have any concerns at any stage please contact:

- Early pregnancy unit (EPU) between 9am and 7pm, Monday to Friday on: **023 8120 8412**
- Bramshaw gynaecology ward on: **023 8120 6035** (out of hours)
- **NHS 111**
- In the event of an emergency, go to your nearest emergency department (ED) or call **999**

## When can I return to work?

You should be able to return to work once you feel well enough. However, everyone is different, and the exact amount of time you will need away from work will vary.

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## Help, support and further information

The team caring for you understand that this is likely to be an incredibly difficult time for you and your partner, and will do their best to support you and answer your questions about what has happened and what will happen now.

Losing a pregnancy, even at an early stage, can be a devastating experience. Everyone is different, and how you feel will depend on your circumstances, previous experiences and physical wellbeing. You and your partner may need time to grieve, and to come to terms with what has happened.

If you feel you are struggling to come to terms with your loss, you may benefit from professional support or counselling. Your hospital doctor or GP will be able to offer more information about this. Contacting one of the support groups below may also be beneficial.

**The Miscarriage Association** is a charity that offers support to people who have lost a baby. They have a helpline (**01924 200 799**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm), an email address: [info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk) and can put you in touch with a support volunteer. [www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk)

### **The Winchester Miscarriage Support Group**

Meets on the first Thursday of every month at St Mary's Church Rooms 7.30 to 9pm.  
Email: [Winchestermiscarriages@gmail.com](mailto:Winchestermiscarriages@gmail.com)

### **Firgrove Trust**

A locally based charity offering free support, information and counselling.  
Telephone: **023 8078 3134**  
[www.thefirgrovecentre.org.uk](http://www.thefirgrovecentre.org.uk)

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8120 4688 for help.