

Patient information factsheet

Recovering well after a surgical termination of pregnancy

We understand that this may be a very difficult time for you. We hope this factsheet will help to answer some of the questions you may have after having a surgical termination of pregnancy. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of our team.

Common symptoms after a surgical termination of pregnancy

Vaginal bleeding

It is normal to have some vaginal bleeding for up to two weeks after your operation. This bleeding will be similar to a normal period and you may pass some small blood clots. Bleeding will usually stop after this time, but some women may spot until their next period.

Please contact us if you experience heavy bleeding (soaking a pad every one to two hours) or if you pass any clots larger than the size of a 10p coin.

Your next menstrual period will begin four to six weeks after your operation. If you have not had a period within four weeks, please contact your GP for advice.

You should only use sanitary towels until you have finished your next period. This will help to prevent an infection. After your next period, you can start to use tampons again for future periods.

Pain

Most women experience some mild, period-like pain, cramps or discomfort after the operation. You can take pain relief, such as paracetamol, to help ease your symptoms. Always read the label or instructions before taking medication.

You can take your next dose of pain relief at _____ (time).

Emotions

Your body will be undergoing lots of hormonal changes, so you may experience a variety of emotions after your operation. This is normal. If you would like to discuss how you're feeling, contact your GP. They will be able to provide counselling or refer you for counselling if you need it.

When to seek medical advice

Most women recover well after a surgical termination. However, as with any operation, there can be complications.

Contact Bramshaw Women's Unit on **023 8120 6035** (up to two weeks after your operation) or contact your GP or NHS **111** if you experience:

- increasing abdominal (tummy) pain
- heavy or prolonged vaginal bleeding
- offensive smelling vaginal discharge
- a temperature (fever)
- a loss of appetite and vomiting (being sick)
- any difficulty passing urine or emptying your bladder, a burning or stinging sensation when passing urine or passing urine more often than usual
- a painful, red, swollen, hot leg or difficulty bearing weight on your legs (this may be caused by a deep vein thrombosis (DVT))

Recovering from your operation

Normal activities

A surgical termination affects every woman differently. Make sure you rest and take it easy until you feel able to return to your normal activities.

Eating and drinking

You can eat and drink as normal after your operation.

Sex

You can have sexual intercourse as soon as you feel ready, and any pain and bleeding has stopped.

It is important you are aware that it is possible to get pregnant a few weeks after your operation (even before you have a period). For more information about contraception, contact your GP or visit your local family planning clinic.

Washing

You may bathe and shower as normal after your operation. If you had a general anaesthetic, you may feel dizzy for a couple of days so please have an adult around to help you, if needed, and keep the bathroom door unlocked.

Advice after an anaesthetic and/or sedation

For the first 48 hours after your operation, you may feel more sleepy than usual and your judgement may be impaired. During this time, you must not:

- drive (your insurance company will have its own conditions for when you are insured to start driving again, so it is important you check your policy)
- drink alcohol
- work
- exercise
- handle machinery (including an oven or hob)
- sign any legal documents

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Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Bramshaw Women's Unit
Telephone: **023 8120 6035**

Useful links

www.rcog.org.uk

www.bpas.org

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**