



## Medical Abortions

### Medical Abortion in Newfoundland & Labrador:

When an individual with the required reproductive structures is faced with an unplanned pregnancy, there are several options available to them. The common options of continuing the pregnancy (leading to parenting or adoption), as well as of terminating the pregnancy (abortion) all require careful consideration.

There are many reasons why an individual would terminate (stop) a pregnancy. These reasons may include medical complications caused by the pregnancy (ranging from mild to life-threatening), lack of resources, such as money and support, or deciding that they are not ready to be a parent.

### What is a Medical Abortion?

A medical abortion is simply an abortion done using medication rather than surgery. The Canadian brand name for the combination of two medications (Mifepristone and Misoprostol) are used for this procedure is *Mifegymiso*. The medication blocks the continuation of the pregnancy, as well as causes the uterus to contract, helping it to push out its contents.

Although it is relatively new to Canada, the drug Mifepristone (one of the drugs in Mifegymiso) has been available in France and China for nearly 60 years and is now available in 60 countries. It has also been declared as safe by the World Health Organization.

The medication is taken in two steps. First, one tablet of Mifepristone is taken orally under the supervision of a healthcare provider. Next, 24 to 48 hours later, four tablets of Misoprostol are taken by being placed between your gum and cheek for 30 minutes.

### Who Can Take Mifegymiso?

Individuals who are up to 9 weeks (63 days) along in their pregnancy are eligible to take Mifegymiso.

Examples of instances where the medical abortion option is not suitable for an individual are if they:

- Are farther than 63 days along in their pregnancy
- Are unable to access emergency care within 14 days of taking the medication
- Have an ectopic pregnancy

- Have a bleeding disorder (hypo-coagulation disease) or are taking anticoagulants (drugs that prevent blood clots)
  - Must take steroids (ex. asthma uncontrolled by treatment)
  - Are taking corticosteroids (which reduce the immune system)
    - Have renal failure
  - Have an allergy to mifepristone and/or misoprotol or prostaglandins
- Have an IUD in place (must be removed before termination process begins)
  - Have a pelvic infection

## **What are the Symptoms of Termination?**

The typical; symptoms of termination are vaginal bleeding and cramping.

*Vaginal bleeding* will typically begin within 48 hours of taking the misoprostol tablets and lasts on average 10 to 16 days. Bleeding can range from light to heavy but is usually more than the individual's typical period. Light bleeding can continue for 30 days.

*Cramping* can start within 4 hours of taking the misoprostol tablets and can range from mild to severe. It is usually more than a typical menstrual period. Significant cramping should decrease once the pregnancy is expelled.

**A follow up assessment is necessary to confirm the termination of the pregnancy.**

## **What are the Possible Side Effects?**

Possible side effects of a medical abortion include:

- Headache
- Breast tenderness
  - Fainting
- Skin rashes/itching
  - Nausea
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhea
  - Dizziness
- Abdominal discomfort (pain, cramps, etc.)
  - Short term fever/chills

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### **How Will I Feel After I Have an Abortion?**

The most common feeling after an abortion is relief. Individuals realize it was the best decision for them.

However, it is normal to feel sad; you can grieve for something that might have been. Feeling sadness does not mean you made the wrong decision or that you are a bad person. If you feel bad for a long time, you can ask a doctor or Planned Parenthood for a referral for counseling.

### **Will an Abortion Make Me Infertile (Not Able to Have Children)?**

The procedure for abortions is very safe. Research tells us that the procedure will not affect the individual's ability to have children in the future. The D&C procedure is used very commonly to treat a wide variety of gynecological conditions.

### **If I am Not Comfortable with my Family Doctor, Where Can I Go for Follow-up Care and Birth Control?**

If you feel that you cannot go to your family doctor, you can do your follow-up at Planned Parenthood. Appointments are 100% confidential (private), and Planned Parenthood will not contact anyone.

### **Will anyone be able to tell that I had an abortion?**

The only people who will know that you had an abortion are those people that you choose to tell. No one needs to know that you stopped a pregnancy.

If you need someone to talk to about your options, or if you need more information about the decision you have made, we are available to help.

## **Sexual Health Questions? We Have Answers!**

#### **Location:**

47 St. Clare Avenue, St. John's, NL, A1C 2J9

#### **Hours:**

Monday: 9am - 4:30pm

Tuesday: 9am - 4:30pm

Wednesday: 9am - 4:30pm

Thursday: 12pm – 6:00pm

Friday: 9am - 4:30pm

#### **Phone:**

579-1009

Toll Free: 1-877-NO MYTHS

(1-877-666-9847)

#### **Website:**

[www.plannedparenthoodnlshc.com](http://www.plannedparenthoodnlshc.com)

#### **Email:**

[pp.nlshc@gmail.com](mailto:pp.nlshc@gmail.com)

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