

## **Surgical Abortion Take Home Instructions**

### What To Do

- Avoid aspirin for the next 2 weeks because this may increase your bleeding and worsen stomach upset.
- You may use any sanitary products that you prefer (tampons, pads, or menstrual cups)
- You may resume your regular activities (work, school, etc.) when you feel ready
- You may resume sexual activity when you feel ready

### What To Expect

#### *Bleeding*

Right after your abortion you may have bleeding that is like a heavy period. You may pass small blood clots. Right after the abortion you may also have vaginal discharge that looks yellow/brown or ashy (from the cleaning ointment and medications used during the abortion).

You may continue to have light bleeding or spotting for several weeks. This bleeding may stop and re-start. Your first period may be lighter or heavier than usual. Your periods may be irregular for the first few months after the abortion. You might find it helpful to carry sanitary products (pads, panty liners, or tampons) with you until your periods return to normal.

#### *Cramping*

You may have menstrual-like cramping after the procedure. This cramping should lessen over time. Take pain medications as prescribed and use a heating pad or hot water bottle as needed.

#### *Other Side Effects*

You may have nausea, stomach upset, or diarrhea from medications given for the abortion. These symptoms should go away within a few days. Nausea and vomiting related to the pregnancy should go away within a few days.

Especially after 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester abortion, women may experience breast tenderness, swelling, or lactation (milk production). This might happen within a week of the abortion and usually lasts several days. Wearing a tight-fitting sports bra, using ice packs, and taking prescribed ibuprofen will help with these symptoms.

#### *Contraception (Birth Control)*

Most women are able to become pregnant again very quickly after abortion, usually before they have had their next menstrual period. You should start your birth control method the day after your abortion (or as directed by your doctor).

If you have sex without a reliable birth control method (you haven't started a method, didn't use a condom, the condom broke, etc.) you should take emergency contraception and call us. One type of emergency birth control pill, Plan B (or Next Choice) is available by asking a pharmacist at a drug store (if you are age 17 or older). Other types of emergency birth control need a prescription.

Please call us anytime if you need birth control.

#### *Exercise & Rest*

Most women prefer to take it easy for a few days after an abortion. You should not exercise strenuously for the first week (running, tough work-outs, etc.), as cramping or bleeding may happen. Let your body be your guide.

### Feelings

Women experience a variety of emotions when they are pregnant and when they have an abortion. The most common feeling after abortion is relief. However, some women may experience happiness or sadness. Some of these feelings may be stronger because of the hormonal changes that happen with pregnancy and abortion. If you are feeling consistently sad or distressed, please contact us or your referring doctor.

Confidential telephone counseling is available to women who have had an abortion. These counseling services are not affiliated with Kapiolani Medical Center for Women & Children or your doctor. Two free telephone counseling services are:

- Connect & Breathe: 1-866-647-1764
- Exhale: 1-866-4-EXHALE

### Follow-Up

Most patients do not need a follow up visit after a surgical abortion. However, should follow up if your doctor tells you to, you do not feel well, or have any concerns.

### Contact Us

- Contact us right away if you have:
  - Bleeding that is more than 2 completely soaked full-size pads per hour for more than 2 hours in a row.
  - Persistent feelings that you might pass out or faint.
  - Pain that is uncontrolled with prescribed medications, rest, and heating pads.
  - A fever higher than 100.5 F.
  - Severe vomiting or diarrhea lasting more than 4-6 hours.
  - Pus-like vaginal discharge.
  - Symptoms of an allergic reaction (rash, shortness of breath).
- If you are having an emergency, please go to an emergency room.
- Please call the office during business hours Monday-Friday:
  - Kapiolani Medical Center for Women & Children, Suite 801: 808-203-6580
  - Pali Momi Pavilion Suite 3010 : 671-0090
- After business hours, and on weekends and holidays, call the operator at Kapiolani Medical Center and ask to speak to the UH (University of Hawaii) OBGYN doctor on call: **808-983-6000**.
- For more information: <https://hawaiifamilyplanning.org>