
and misoprostol. You can also use misoprostol alone to have an abortion.

First, you take a pill called mifepristone. Pregnancy needs a hormone called progesterone to grow normally. Mifepristone blocks your body's own progesterone, stopping the pregnancy from growing.

Then you take the second medicine, misoprostol, either right away or up to 48 hours later. This medicine causes cramping and bleeding to empty your uterus. It's kind of like having a really heavy, crampy period, and the process is very similar to an early miscarriage. If you don't have any bleeding within 24 hours after taking misoprostol, call your nurse or doctor.

Your doctor or nurse may give you both medicines at the health center. In some states you can do a virtual visit and have the pills mailed to you or pick them up at a local pharmacy. Some states have laws that say you must come to the health center for a separate visit before you get the abortion pills.

Your doctor or nurse will give you detailed directions about where, when, and how to take the medicines. And they'll talk with you about medicines to manage side effects, like cramp pain and nausea.

How effective is the abortion pill?

The abortion pill is very effective. If you're taking mifepristone and misoprostol, it depends on how far along the pregnancy is, and how many doses of medicine you take:

At 8 weeks pregnant or less, it works about 99-98% of the time.

At 8-9 weeks pregnant, it works about 98-96% of the time.

At 9-10 weeks pregnant, it works about 98-93% of the time.

If you take an extra dose of misoprostol, it works about 99% of the time.

At 10-11 weeks pregnant, it works about 98% of the time.

If you take an extra dose of misoprostol, it works about 98% of the time.

In general, taking both mifepristone and misoprostol works a bit better than taking misoprostol only.

Taking misoprostol alone works to end the pregnancy about 98-95% of the time — depending on how far along the pregnancy is and how you take the medicine.

The abortion pill usually works, but if it doesn't, you can take more medicine or have an in-clinic abortion.

When can I take the abortion pill?

In general, you can have a medication abortion up to 77 days (11 weeks) after the first day of your last period. If it's been 77 days or more since the first day of your last period, you can have an in-clinic abortion to end your pregnancy.

Why do people choose the abortion pill?

Which kind of abortion you choose all depends on your personal preference and situation. With medication abortion, some people like that you don't need to have a procedure in a doctor's office. You can have your medication abortion on your own schedule, at home or in another comfortable place that you choose. You get to decide who you want to be with during your abortion, or you can go it alone. Because medication abortion is similar to a miscarriage, many people feel like it's more "natural" and less invasive. And some people may not have an in-clinic abortion provider close by, so abortion pills are more available to them.

Your doctor, nurse, or health center staff can help you decide which kind of abortion is best for you.

More questions from patients:

Can the abortion pill be reversed after you have taken it?

What is the RU-486 abortion pill?

What happens if I take the abortion pill after 11 weeks?

Next

How does the abortion pill work?

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Abortion Clinics Near You

View Planned Parenthood health centers that provide abortion care and get the information you need to schedule an appointment.

Your information is private and anonymous.

Find Abortion Services

Do you want to talk to someone about your medication abortion?

Educators at Aya Contigo, a chat service designed to provide emotional support to people about medication abortions, are available in real time to provide information when you need it. 10am-10pm EST (only available in the US).

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