Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

Medical management (treatment) of miscarriage: Patient instructions

You will have been given this leaflet because you have chosen to treat your miscarriage with medication. You can contact us on ☎ 0118 322 7181.

Please read this leaflet along with the '*Medical management (treatment) of first trimester miscarriage*' patient information leaflet.

How do I prepare for medical treatment of miscarriage?

This will often be an emotional as well as physical experience and you need to ensure that you are as prepared as possible before starting the treatment.

- If you have children at home, it is advisable to organise family or friends to take care of them for you or with you.
- Please have someone with you for emotional support during the miscarriage.
- Please have a good supply of large (or night-time) sanitary towels.
- Make sure that you have plenty of painkillers. Most women take paracetamol or ibuprofen and if necessary, these painkillers can be taken together, but please follow the recommended dosage.
- If you have further questions, please ask the nurses for advice about painkillers and anti-sickness tablets.

Will I get help and support from the clinic during the treatment?

Although your miscarriage takes place at home, there is a 24-hour telephone helpline (**Emergency Gynaecology Clinic number ☎ 0118 322 7181**) for all women wanting advice during the treatment. Women who need more care can be admitted to the hospital at any time.

What happens in the clinic?

- An appointment will be made for you on whichever day you choose (usually Monday – Thursday).
- You will be given information and instructions on the medical treatment.
- You will be given the clinic telephone number and opening times.
- **Before leaving the clinic** you will be given the medicine (Mifepristone (oral tablet) and vaginal Misoprostol) to take home.
- **You will be given a supply of Codeine 30mg tablets. This is to assist with the pain. You can also purchase some paracetamol tablets over the counter and take as instructed in the drug patient information leaflet enclosed in the packet.**
- We will provide you with a pregnancy test as you will be advised to take a pregnancy test 3 weeks after taking the medication.
- You will have a blood test to check your iron levels.

What should I expect at home?

Taking the medicine:

- **The clinic will contact you with your blood test results (do not take the medication before the clinic has contacted you).**
- When you are ready at home you should take the Mifepristone orally (by mouth) first
- After 48 hours you should insert the Misoprostol tablets into your vagina.
- You can use your fingers or a tampon – the nurse in the clinic can explain how this is done.
- It is best to insert the tablets in the morning after you have passed urine (had a pee).
- We advise that you wear a sanitary towel and lie down for about 30 minutes after inserting the vaginal tablets.
- The tablets take a few hours to dissolve. If they fall out, reinsert them back into the vagina.
- The same misoprostol tablets can be swallowed, but may be less effective than if taken vaginally. **This is why we advise that they are taken vaginally.**

What happens after taking the vaginal tablets?

- Bleeding normally **starts after a few hours** and usually **ends within 1-2 days.**
- You are likely to experience strong 'period type**' cramping pains** for the first 1-2 days. You should take regular painkillers.
- **Bleeding can be heavy** and you are likely to pass clots for 4-48 hours.
- If there is little or no bleeding in the 12 hours after taking the vaginal tablets, **call the clinic the next morning for more advice.**
- The **bleeding can go on for up to 3 weeks** but should gradually get lighter over this time.
- If your bleeding continues for more than 3 weeks, call the clinic during normal opening hours.
- After 3 weeks, if your bleeding has stopped, take a home urine pregnancy test – this should be negative.
- If your pregnancy test is **positive, please call the clinic during normal opening hours**.
- The medical treatment has finished if your pregnancy test is negative and the bleeding has stopped.

Are there any dos and don'ts?

- You can eat and drink as normal.
- After taking the tablets we advise using sanitary towels and not tampons until the miscarriage has ended.
- You should take showers (if possible) rather than baths until the miscarriage has ended.
- **Please take all unused misoprostol tablets to any pharmacy/chemist or the clinic. Please DO NOT throw them down the toilet, into the rubbish-bin, or give them to other people.**

What are the side effects from the medication?

- Some women will **feel sick and may vomit**. This normally settles within 2-6 hours.
- Some women have **diarrhoea**. This usually gets better within a day.
- It is quite common to feel **feverish** and sometimes **have a high temperature** for up to a day.
- You may notice a **skin rash**. This should disappear within a few days.

Side effects are fairly common. Most last between 2 and 24 hours. **If you are not coping with the side effects, or they last more than a day you can call the clinic at any time for advice.**

When else should I call the clinic?

- If you feel **dizzy, faint or unwell** – call at any time.
- If you have a **temperature** and/or feel **feverish for more than 24 hours** – call at any time.
- If you **cannot cope with the pain after taking painkillers** – call at any time.
- If you are worried about **very heavy bleeding** (clots the size of your palm or soaking sanitary pads every 20 minutes) – call at any time.
- If **heavy bleeding goes on for more than 3 days** (the bleeding should get lighter with time) – call during clinic opening hours.
- If **light bleeding goes on for more than 3 weeks** – call during clinic opening hours.
- If your home pregnancy test is **positive after 3 weeks** – call during clinic opening hours.
- If you have **smelly vaginal discharge** – call during clinic opening hours.
- **If you are worried about any aspect of the medical treatment of miscarriage – call at any time.**

Will I see the pregnancy tissue?

Most women will only see blood clots. Some women may see pregnancy tissue (early placenta) or even the pregnancy sac and embryo (very early stage of a baby).

What should I do if I see the embryo?

- If you wish, you can bring the pregnancy remains to the hospital.
- You may wish to organise a private burial or cremation.
- You may wish to bury the pregnancy remains on private land as long as you follow certain legal rules/regulations.
- For more information, please ask for the information leaflet called '*Sensitive management of pregnancy tissue in EPU*'.

Around 1% of women can suffer from recurrent miscarriage (three or more consecutive miscarriages). In this case, we can send the pregnancy tissue to Oxford to look at the cytogenetics (genetic makeup) of the tissue.

If you would like this test then please let the team looking after you know so we can plan this for you.

Contact information

Emergency Gynaecology Clinic – Sonning Ward
Level 5 Maternity Block,
Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading RG1 5AN
☎ **0118 322 7181 – This number is available 24 hours a day.**

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Gynaecology, C Prentice, Consultant Obs & Gynae
Reviewed: May 2026
Next review due: May 2028