

Early termination of pregnancy:

MSI Reproductive Choices and other support groups

All of our staff here recognise that this is a very difficult time for you. This leaflet will provide you with useful numbers both for MSI Reproductive Choices and different support groups that are available to you.

What next?

We will inform your GP and community midwife of your decision. You will need to phone MSI Reproductive Choices on **0345 300 8090** for a consultation. MSI Reproductive Choices will advise you on the nearest centre to best meet your needs in your circumstances. They will offer you both medical and surgical termination of pregnancy. There is lots of useful information on their services at the end of this leaflet.

During your phone call to MSI Reproductive Choices, the staff will explain what will happen for you to be offered a date to attend for the procedure. At around 6-8 weeks after the procedure, you will receive a letter from the fetal medicine team at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. This letter will provide a detailed review of the outcome of the pregnancy and advise on any extra support needed in the future. We recommend that you have one normal period before trying for another baby.

You will be given contact numbers to organise early scans in the next pregnancy.

It is normal to feel physically or emotionally low for a while and over time this will gradually improve, however it is important to speak to someone if you feel that your emotional and physical wellbeing are not improving. Look after yourself and give yourself time to recover and please either contact your own GP or one of the support groups

listed below. Please do feel free to contact the bereavement midwife if you would like to know more about ways to remember your baby.

Where to get further information

- MSI Reproductive Choices <https://www.msichoices.org> 0345 300 8090 or email services@msichoices.org.uk
- ARC (Antenatal Results and Choices) offer information and support to parents in your situation. Phone 0207 713 7486 or text 07908 68300 (Mon – Fri 10:00hrs to 17:30hrs) or visit their website at <http://www.arc-uk.org>
- The Willows Support Group: www.willowssupportgroup.co.uk
- RBFT Bereavement Midwife : 07500 123 912
- Talking Therapies 0300 365 2000

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

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

AN Screening MW/Bereavement MW, November 2008

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Next review due: September 2025

We are sorry that you are facing the painful prospect of ending your pregnancy after a prenatal diagnosis of fetal anomaly. We are assuming you have discussed the implications of the findings with your health care team as we are unable to provide fetal medicine expertise.

This leaflet explains what to expect after you have chosen the surgical method to end the pregnancy through accessing care with MSI Reproductive Choices (MSI).

What does the procedure involve?

A surgical termination is carried out under anaesthesia and it will involve 1 or 2 visits to an MSI clinic. During your first consultation (pre-assessment appointment), you will talk with a nurse or midwife who will explain the procedure, answer your questions, carry out some routine pre-operation checks and take your consent to proceed with the termination. If you are over 19 weeks of pregnancy, you will also need to have a minor procedure, either during this appointment or on a different day, called 'Dilapan insertion' (see below). This is to prepare the neck of your womb (cervix) for the surgical termination to make the procedure as safe as possible.

The surgical termination will take place during your next visit. When you arrive for your treatment, you will be seen by a nurse or midwife who will carry out the final pre-operation checks. If you are less than 19 weeks of pregnancy, you will need to take tablets called 'misoprostol' to prepare the cervix for the surgical termination. This can take 1-4 hours depending on how many weeks pregnant you are. You will be offered a private waiting room where you can stay with your partner while you are waiting. When your procedure time arrives, a nurse/midwife will take you into another room to get changed, and then lead you into the treatment room. You will then be introduced to the treatment room team including the surgeon and anaesthetist and have the opportunity to ask any remaining questions you may have.

The anaesthetist will insert a cannula in your arm or hand and use this to give anaesthesia. The procedure will take between 10-20 minutes and you will wake up in a different room. Once you are more awake, you will be moved to the shared recovery ward to complete your post-operative recovery. Most people find they wake up with pain similar to period-like cramps, and may be bleeding heavier than a normal period, but we will give you painkillers to make sure you are comfortable. The nurse/midwife will explain your aftercare and provide you with written information to take home which includes signs and symptoms that may need medical attention. Once you are ready for discharge, you may reunite with your partner outside of the shared ward. Most patients will be ready to go home around 1 hour after the procedure and someone will need to drive you home.

What is 'Dilapan insertion'?

For pregnancies over 19 weeks, the cervix needs to be prepared for surgery by inserting small expanders called 'Dilapan' that gradually expand overnight. This is to enable the procedure to take place safely and reduce the chance of injury to the cervix.

Dilapan insertion is carried out on the day before your surgery. It is like having a gynaecology examination or smear test and is done by a trained nurse/midwife or doctor who will explain the procedure to you. You can eat and drink as normal before this procedure.

What are the risks of surgical termination?

The nurse/midwife will go over the risks with you in detail during your pre-assessment appointment. Surgical termination is a safe and common procedure, but risks include bleeding, infection and retained pregnancy tissue. These risks are less than that faced in childbirth. Rarely, an emergency transfer to the local NHS hospital for further urgent procedures may be required.

What will happen once the pregnancy has ended?

MSI will arrange sensitive disposal, or you can choose to have a private burial or cremation. A post-mortem examination is not possible after surgical termination however, you can speak to your obstetric team if you would like to have genetic testing.

What should I expect in my recovery?

Physically, most people find it is like recovering from a heavy period – there will be a heavy loss that should reduce each day, sometimes with fresh bleeding and clots at the beginning but usually reducing to a darker loss or discharge after a week. For most people it settles completely after 2-3 weeks. Your normal periods may take a while to come back, but it is usually after 5-8 weeks. At the beginning you may find simple painkillers like paracetamol or ibuprofen useful, or often a hot water bottle or warm bath is helpful to reduce cramps. Other than not driving for 24 hours after the anaesthetic, it is safe to otherwise do whatever you feel comfortable with – this includes exercise, showers, baths, swimming, using tampons or resuming sexual intercourse. Please be aware that your fertility can return immediately, and many people find they need additional time to come to terms with what has happened. Occasionally, especially in later pregnancies, your breasts may leak some milk. This should settle quickly but is likely to be helped with a comfortable support bra and simple pain killers if necessary.

What emotional support is available after we leave the clinic?

You may experience a range of feelings when you get home. Some parents describe feeling relief, sadness, anger, intense grief and anxiety. Be assured that it is normal to feel these emotions. MSI offers a counselling service if you would like to talk to someone. To book an appointment, please call our advice line on **0345 300 8090**. The charity Antenatal Results and Choices (ARC) is also a helpful, independent organization providing emotional support. You can also contact your hospital team or your GP.

This leaflet was written in collaboration with Antenatal Results and Choices (ARC).

Antenatal Results and Choices (ARC)

ARC is a charity that offers non-directive, individualized, practical information and emotional support to expectant parents who are told that their baby is not developing as expected and are making decisions on how the pregnancy should proceed. ARC also provides specialised bereavement support for those who have ended a pregnancy after a diagnosis.

0207 713 7486

info@arc-uk.org

<https://www.arc-uk.org/>

Stillbirth and neonatal death charity (SANDS)

SANDS is a charity that offers support to anyone affected by the death of a baby.

0808 164 3332

<https://www.sands.org.uk/>

