

Saint Mary's Hospital
The Whitworth Clinic

Information for Patients

The Whitworth Clinic

This leaflet will give you information about the service, treatment and aftercare to help you through this difficult time.

If there is anything you are unsure of, please ask the staff at any time.

If you feel the need to discuss your decision or explore your thoughts and feelings before or after the termination, there is a counsellor available. You can make an appointment on (0161) 276 6283 (8.30 am – 4.30 pm; answerphone available out of hours) or ask a member of staff.

The service is confidential even if you are under 16 years of age. However, if we feel that you or another person may be at risk of harm, we may need to share information with other professionals. We would always discuss this with you.

Please let your nurse know if you do not want your GP to be contacted.

Before a termination of pregnancy can be undertaken, various tests need to be performed:

1. **Ultrasound scan** – to check the stage of your pregnancy. If you have already had a scan in this pregnancy, please inform the clinic staff prior to your appointment.
2. **Blood tests** – to check your blood count, blood group and for a sickle/thalassaemia screen.
3. **Sexual health screening** – to check for vaginal infection.

Before the termination you will see a nurse. She will discuss your options with you and answer any questions you have. You will also see a doctor who will make sure you understand and consent to treatment. Your appointment may take up to 4 hours. You are welcome to bring someone with you for support, however if possible, we advise that you do not bring children.

At Saint Mary's Hospital, we offer two different ways of ending a pregnancy. Both options are explained in this leaflet. Please discuss the options with our staff to ensure you choose the right method for you.

In-patient medical termination

Early pregnancy – under 10 weeks

This is a two stage procedure which involves taking two different medicines 36-48 hours apart. The effect of the medication will be similar to an early natural miscarriage. If there is availability, it may be possible to have stage one after the initial consultation.

Your appointment may take up to 4 hours. You are welcome to bring someone with you for support, however if possible, we advise that you do not bring children.

For the first stage, you will need to come to hospital to take a tablet called Mifepristone. This tablet blocks the hormone Progesterone which is needed for a continuing pregnancy and it 'prepares' the uterus (womb) for the next stage. You may go straight home and carry on as normal, although it is advised that you do not smoke or drink alcohol until two days after the termination is complete.

It is possible some women may experience light bleeding/ spotting or mild period type pains after this stage.

You will be asked to return to the Gynaecology ward two days later for the second stage of the treatment.

This involves having Misoprostol tablets inserted vaginally.

These tablets will cause the uterus (womb) to contract and empty so you will have heavy bleeding and period type pain. Women vary in their reaction to this treatment: If you need pain relief, please ask the nurse.

You may also experience some diarrhoea, sickness and hot flushes.

Eventually, you will pass the pregnancy through the vagina. You will need to use a bedpan every time you use the toilet so that the nurses can check that the termination is complete.

The whole procedure will take approximately 4 to 6 hours, but you may stay longer if you do not feel well enough to go home.

Please arrange for someone to escort you home.

As far as possible you will be given a single room. You may like to bring someone with you as well as books/magazines, snacks and drinks.

Please also bring some loose, comfortable clothing, spare underwear and some sanitary towels (not tampons). You will be able to eat and drink normally for both admissions.

Very occasionally, the pregnancy may not be passed after six hours. If you are well, you may still go home. You will need to return in 7-10 days to have another scan and be reviewed to ensure that the treatment is complete.

Out-patient

Early pregnancy – under 9 weeks

This procedure is offered to ladies who meet the criteria and wish to go home for the second part of their medical treatment rather than staying on the hospital ward.

This is a two stage procedure and the first stage is the same as the in-patient early medical termination stage. However, you will return to the Whitworth Clinic 2 days later rather than the ward to have the second part of your treatment.

The second visit will be to the clinic and will last approximately 30 - 45 minutes.

A nurse will discuss with you any symptoms that you may have experienced since your first appointment. If all has been well, your treatment will continue.

There is a waiting room for relatives and friends to stay during this visit.

Misoprostol tablets will be inserted into your vagina. These tablets help your uterus to contract and empty in order to expel the pregnancy, which means you will start to bleed and experience period-like pains.

Pain relief medication and possibly anti-biotics will also be given to you at this time.

You may go home following the treatment but you should take it easy for a couple of hours after. After this time, you may find that moving around will ease any discomfort.

You should arrange for someone to take you home from the clinic and stay with you during the treatment and overnight.

The termination usually takes place approximately 4 - 6 hours after following the insertion of the tablets.

In some cases, the termination may occur earlier or later than the 4 - 6 hours anticipated. During the treatment, some women experience heavy bleeding and a lot of pain, while others experience very little bleeding and mild pain. You may also experience some diarrhoea, sickness and hot flushes.

This method of termination requires a follow-up appointment.

You will be given an appointment for a blood pregnancy test approximately 2 weeks after your treatment.

It is important that you attend this appointment to confirm that the treatment is complete.

Sometimes it may also be necessary for you to have a scan.

Late pregnancy – 10 to 19 weeks

Again, this is a two stage procedure, and the first stage is the same as the in-patient early medical termination.

The second stage of this treatment (again two days later) involves having Misoprostol tablets inserted vaginally, then taking them by mouth every three hours or up to 4 doses. The tablets will make your womb contract and your cervix (the entrance to the womb) open to allow the pregnancy to be expelled. This could be quite upsetting and there is a chance that you may see the fetus. We will do everything possible to help you through this difficult time and the nurse will discuss what will happen with you.

This procedure may take up to 12 hours and involve an overnight stay in view of the pregnancy being more advanced.

With both medical termination options, each woman reacts differently to the treatment. For this reason, it is difficult to predict how much pain and bleeding you can expect, or how long the treatment will take. The nurse will be there to help and support you and to provide any pain relieving medications you may require.

The treatment is safe and suitable for most women but please tell the nurse and doctor if you have any medical conditions.

Most medical treatments have potential side effects or risks. With this the main risks, though small, are:

- Excessive vaginal bleeding.
- Infection of the womb.
- Incomplete abortion.

Surgical termination

In-patient surgical termination

General anaesthetic

This method can be used for pregnancies between 8 and 12+6 weeks.

You will need to be admitted to the ward for one day.

You should have nothing to eat or drink for 6 - 8 hours before your operation.

1 - 2 hours before the operation you may have a pessary inserted into your vagina. Some women get period type pain, bleeding or diarrhoea at this stage.

You will be escorted to theatre and will be put to sleep with a general anaesthetic for approximately 20 minutes.

Suction is used to empty the uterus (womb). Once you have fully recovered you may go home.

Please arrange for someone to collect you and to remain with you until the next day. You should not drive or operate machinery for 24 hours.

Every form of surgery has some risk. With this operation, the risks, though small, are:

- Infection of the womb.
- Excessive bleeding.
- Incomplete abortion.
- Perforation of the womb.
- Damage to the cervix.

Out-patient surgical termination

Local anaesthetic

This procedure is called manual vacuum aspiration (MVA), which can be done using local anaesthetic for pregnancies under 10 weeks.

This means we can carry out the procedure with you awake in the clinic, and will avoid the need to have a general anaesthetic.

It is a quick and convenient procedure, typically requiring a 3 - 4 hour hospital visit.

We will give you painkillers and a vaginal pessary to help soften and open the neck of your womb approximately 1 hour before the procedure.

This makes the MVA procedure easier and safer. Some women will experience period-like pain, bleeding or diarrhoea during this stage.

Local anaesthetic will be injected into the neck of the womb to numb the area.

A small flexible suction tube attached to a syringe will gently be passed through the neck of your womb and the pregnancy tissue will be removed.

The procedure only takes a few minutes and towards the end of the procedure we expect you may have period pains as the womb empties and it will contract.

There will be gas and air available if you require it. The pain will settle soon after the procedure. However, if you require further pain relief we can provide it.

Following the procedure, we will provide you with a drink and something to eat and ask you to remain with us for observation for approximately 30 minutes.

A follow-up appointment shouldn't be necessary. However, we will supply you with contact numbers should you have any queries or concerns.

Although MVA has been proven to be safe, like any procedure, there are some risks:

- There is a small risk of bleeding, and an even smaller risk of severe bleeding, which may result in needing a blood transfusion.
- There is a minimal risk of infection, which can be treated with antibiotics.
- There is a very rare risk of perforating the uterus (hole in the womb).
- You may also feel faint during or shortly after the procedure, but this usually disappears soon after.
- Occasionally we are not able to complete the procedure for reasons such as pain or difficulty passing the suction tube. Alternatives will then be discussed with you.

Who cannot have the procedure:

- Women with moderate-severe bleeding or pain.
- Women showing signs of infection.
- Women with large uterine fibroids, uterine abnormalities or previous surgery to the cervix (such as cone biopsy).

Afterwards - Medical and Surgical termination

• **Bleeding**

You may have some bleeding, like a period for up to 7-14 days.

Please use sanitary towels and not tampons during this time.

Your next menstrual period should come 3-8 weeks after the termination.

If you have any concerns regarding your pain or bleeding, are passing clots or have a smelly vaginal discharge please contact the Whitworth Clinic or your GP.

Respectful disposal of your pregnancy remains will be undertaken by cremation (communal or individual) as per local protocols. Please ask staff if you require further information or wish to discuss.

- **Sex**

You may resume sex when the bleeding has stopped and you feel ready in yourself.

- **Contraception**

You can get pregnant straight away! You must use a reliable method of contraception before you have sex again. If you haven't already decided, we can help you choose the method that is best for you.

- **Feelings**

It is normal to feel a range of emotions after an abortion. You may feel, for example: relieved, sad, numb, confused or angry. It is common to feel 'up and down' for a while.

If you need to talk to someone, or would like to make an appointment to see our counsellor, then please call us at the Whitworth Clinic.

The nurse will discuss with you the choices and the options you have depending on how many weeks pregnant you are, your preferences and any medical conditions you may have.

This summary may help:

Medical termination

- Does not involve general anaesthetic.
- There is no surgery to the cervix or womb.
- Can be done at any stage.
- Can be done at the weekend if under 10 weeks.
- You may not need to stay in hospital for the 2nd part of the treatment. (Dependent on medical history/under 9 weeks).
- You may feel that this method is more natural or that you are in control.
- May be more suitable for women with certain medical conditions.

Surgical termination

In-patient:

- You will be asleep during the procedure.
- Your treatment will only need one visit to the hospital.
- Out-patient: no need for general anaesthetic, awake and local anaesthetic used. This is a shorter stay of 3-4 hours.
- May be more suitable for women with certain medical conditions.

Saint Mary's Hospital is a large teaching hospital and sometimes we have trainee doctors or nurses present in the clinic. Please let staff know if you do not wish them to be present during your consultation.

Saint Mary's Hospital contact numbers:

If you have any worries, concerns or symptoms you wish to report, please contact:

Central Booking Service

(Daily, 8.00 am - 8.00 pm)
0345 365 0565

The Whitworth Clinic

(0161) 276 6283 (Tuesday - Friday)

If there is no one available to take your call, please leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible or if urgent contact the Emergency Gynaecology Unit.

Emergency Gynaecology Unit (EGU)

(0161) 276 6204
(7 Days 8.00 am – 9.30 pm)

Useful addresses and contact numbers:

Family Planning Association (FPA)

www.fpa.org.uk

Brook

Sex and contraception advice (under 20's)
(0161) 237 3001

Manchester Contraception and Sexual Health Service

(The Hathersage Centre)
(0161) 701 1555

NHS 111

For urgent medical concerns dial 111
(24 hours)