



# What to Expect After a First Trimester Surgical Abortion (or D & C)

*And how to take care of yourself*

**This handout explains what to expect and how to take care of yourself after having a surgical abortion, sometimes called a D & C or termination of pregnancy.**

## **What to Expect**

It is normal to have some vaginal bleeding for up to 4 weeks after your abortion. You may have spotting or a moderate flow. Or, you may not bleed at all.

## **When to Call the Clinic**

Call the clinic if you have:

- Heavy vaginal bleeding that is soaking through more than 2 maxi-pads an hour for 2 hours or more in a row
- Heavy vaginal bleeding that continues 10 days after your abortion (light bleeding or spotting is OK)
- Clots (clumps of blood) that are consistently larger than a lemon
- A fever higher than 100.4°F (38°C)
- Painful cramps not relieved by ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- Vaginal discharge that smells bad or causes pain or itching
- Shaking with chills

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. Clinic staff are also available to help.

- UWMC Maternal and Infant Care Clinic:**  
206-598-4070  
Box 356159  
1959 N.E. Pacific St.  
Seattle, WA 98195
- UWMC Women's Health Care Center:**  
206-598-5500  
Box 354765  
4245 Roosevelt Way N.E.  
Seattle, WA 98195
- UWMC Family Medical Center:**  
206-598-4055  
Box 354770  
4245 Roosevelt Way N.E.  
Seattle, WA 98195
- Harborview Family Medicine Clinic at the Pat Steele Building:**  
206-744-8274  
401 Broadway, Suite 2018  
Seattle, WA 98104
- Women's Clinic at Harborview:**  
206-744-3367  
325 Ninth Ave.  
Ground Floor, West Clinic  
Seattle, WA 98104

## Self-Care

- Be sure to take all of your antibiotics as they were prescribed for you.
- **Week 1 after your abortion:** Do not have sex or put anything in your vagina. This includes tampons and douche. Begin using your hormonal birth control, even though you are not having sex yet.

## Follow-up Care

- Make an appointment to return to the clinic 2 weeks after your abortion. At this visit, your health care provider will make sure you are healing normally and will answer any questions you may have. You may also call your clinic any time if you have questions that cannot wait until this visit.
- Expect your next menstrual period to start 4 to 8 weeks after your abortion.
- You may resume your normal light activities the day after your surgical abortion, if you feel ready. Avoid strenuous physical activities for 1 week. If any activity causes more cramping and bleeding, decrease that activity for a few days.
- Take good care of yourself. Rest when you are tired, eat healthy foods, and drink plenty of fluids.

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