

After Abortion Care

What happens after an abortion can be different for each person.

Common things to expect after a surgical Abortion

For most people having an abortion is a straightforward experience. Most people get back to normal life within one to two days. We recommend that you plan to take some time for yourself, so see if you can get help from family/whānau if possible, and avoid being too busy on the day of your abortion and maybe the day after.

Bleeding and Spotting

Peoples experience will be different just like each persons period is different. Bleeding and cramping can get lighter and then heavier change colour from red to pink to brown (and in between) and is different for everyone. After an abortion, most people will have bleeding for up to 2 weeks. We suggest using a pad when bleeding is heavy, just so you can track how much you're bleeding.

If your bleeding becomes heavy enough to soak through 2 pads in less than an hour for 2 hours or more, or if blood clots are the size of the palm of your hand, call the emergency contact number you have been provided with.

Cramping and Pain

Cramping pain often decreases with bleeding but can come back and be off and on up until your first post-abortion period. The best pain reliever after an abortion is ibuprofen. A hot water bottle or a wheat bag can help a lot but make sure it is not so hot you burn yourself. If you have pain that is really bad and keeps going, please call the emergency contact number you have been provided with.

When will my period return?

Most people get their normal period within 4–6 weeks after their abortion. If it hasn't returned after this time, or if you feel like you are still pregnant more than a few days after your abortion call the abortion service for advice.

Nausea

Most people experience relief from nausea very quickly after an abortion, often as soon as within hours. If you have some lingering nausea or other stomach issues then keep doing what worked before it will get better if it doesn't then please call the emergency contact number you have been provided with.

Breast Tenderness

Breast tenderness is often the last pregnancy symptom to go away. Some people may leak fluid from their breasts after an abortion, ibuprofen, ice packs, and wearing a snug-fitting bra can help. It's completely normal and will go away within a few days. Try to avoid stimulating (touching) your breasts as that can make it last longer.

Emotional Reaction

It's ok to have a wide range of feelings after having an abortion. There are still some pregnancy hormones in your system, so this is to be expected. It's completely fine to feel relief while other people might feel sad or even angry. Remember, there are no "correct" emotions during this experience. If your mood keeps you from doing the things you normally do each day, it's okay to ask for help, the abortion service can provide a counsellor.

When can I use tampons or a menstrual cup?

You will probably want regular full-sized maxi pads immediately after your abortion to better know how much you are bleeding, ask your abortion provider if you don't have any. You can use tampons or a menstrual cup anytime you feel ready. There is no evidence that it is harmful to use a menstrual cup or tampon after an abortion, but pads make it much easier to see how heavy your bleeding is.

When can I have sex?

There is no amount of time you must wait to start having sex. You can have sex whenever you feel ready. But you can become pregnant again within five days after an abortion. So don't wait till your next period to start contraception start it within 5 days of your abortion.