

Medical Management of Miscarriage

September 2024

Misoprostol is a safe and effective medication used to treat a miscarriage for women with early pregnancy loss. Misoprostol can be prescribed by a doctor as an alternative to surgical or expectant management of miscarriage.

A miscarriage may be a sad time for you and your family, and we encourage you to seek support. There are some services listed at the end of this factsheet.

The Treatment

Misoprostol is a self-administered medication which you can take within your home. It is important to take the tablets as prescribed by your doctor. Usually, these tablets need to be dissolved in between your cheek and your gums for 30 minutes before swallowing the remaining fragments with a glass of water.

If you are unable or prefer not to take the tablets this way, they can be inserted into the top of the vagina (like inserting a tampon). You must lie down for 30 minutes to allow them to dissolve. After this, you can move normally, and you may choose to wear a pad. Some fragments of the tablet may appear on your pad however you do not need to remove anything from the vagina after insertion.

What to expect?

It is important that you have a support person at home to care for you during your treatment and miscarriage. For most women, bleeding and cramping pain will start within a few hours of taking Misoprostol. For some, vaginal bleeding may take longer to start and may continue for 2-3 weeks.

You will be prescribed pain killers and anti-nausea medication. To manage pain, you are advised to take regular Paracetamol and Mefenamic Acid. You can also take stronger prescribed pain killers if you need them. Heat packs may also be used as pain relief.

Women who take Misoprostol may experience some side effects, including:

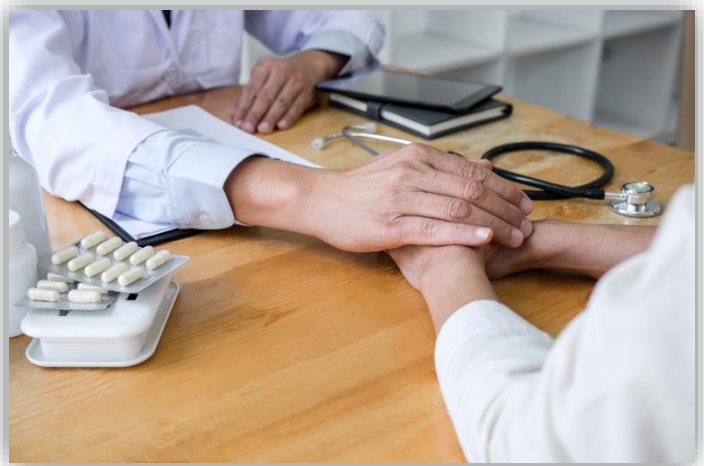
- Diarrhoea
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Vaginal bleeding
- Abdominal cramping and/or pain

Rarer side-effects can include:

- Allergic reaction
- Shivering
- Hot flushes
- Heavy vaginal bleeding

Passing of pregnancy products can include the pregnancy sac and this can be associated with heavier bleeding. Some women experience passing blood clots (that can be the size of a golf ball), abdominal cramps and vaginal pressure. These symptoms will normally reduce when the pregnancy tissue has passed.

If the bleeding is extremely heavy and you are soaking multiple pads per hour without signs that the bleeding is settling or, if you are in severe pain that is not managed with pain relief, you need to go to your nearest emergency department.



Date of Review: September 2024

Date of Next Review: September 2028

Consumer Participation National Standards endorsed

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Royal Hospital for Women, Barker Street, Randwick, NSW 2031. Telephone: 02 9382 6111

What happens next?

- You will receive a phone call from the Early Pregnancy Assessment Service (EPAS) 2-3 days after taking your Misoprostol tablets to discuss your symptoms as well as a follow up call in 2 weeks.
- A home urine pregnancy test is recommended prior to the follow up phone call at 2 weeks.
- If you have completed your miscarriage, you will be discharged from EPAS and be followed up by your GP.
- If medical management is not successful, you will be reviewed by a doctor in EPAS to discuss alternative options which may include surgery.
- To avoid getting an infection, we suggest that you use a shower rather than a bath, avoid swimming, sexual intercourse or inserting anything into your vagina for at least a week.
- Your next menstrual cycle will usually recommence 4-6 weeks following the miscarriage. If this does not occur, please see your GP for a review.

For further help and information, please contact the EPAS nurse, Monday to Friday between 07.30am and 16.00pm on **02 93826701**.

Support services for women experiencing miscarriage or grief are also available below:

Pink Elephants Support Network:

<https://www.pinkelephants.org.au/>

Gidget Foundation Australia:

[Gidget Foundation Australia | Supporting the Mental Health of New and Expectant Parents](#)

Red Nose Grief and Loss:

[Guiding Light - Red Nose Grief and Loss | Supporting you on your journey after the death of a child](#)

Preparing for your next pregnancy

Most women can attempt another pregnancy following one normal menstrual cycle, which ensures the miscarriage is complete. You are advised to continue with a pre-conception folate supplement if you are planning to conceive in the next few months.

If you have had previous miscarriages, you can discuss with your GP about your eligibility for referral to our Recurrent Miscarriage Clinic. Please don't hesitate to discuss contraception options with our EPAS staff or with your GP.

