

Guide to Phone Triage: After Hours Medication Abortion



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Bleeding

No Bleeding

"I came yesterday for the abortion pills and I'm still not bleeding"

****Ask - "Which pills did you take?"***

If a person only took mifepristone (the first pill that they were told to swallow), it is normal for them not to start bleeding. Make sure they have their four misoprostol pills and know how and when they plan to take them.

If a person took misoprostol (the four pills they can insert in their vagina or tuck in their cheeks), proceed to the next question on timing.

****Ask - "How long ago did you take them?"***

If it has been less than 24 hours, you can reassure the patient and tell them to call back if they still have no bleeding after 24 hours.

****Call Transfer*** - If it has been more than 24 hours, you should forward the call to the provider on call.

Too Much Bleeding

"I took the first pill (mifepristone) in the office yesterday and started to bleed before taking the other ones (misoprostol)"

***Ask - "How many pads have you soaked through?"**

Most people don't bleed after taking mifepristone, but some bleed lightly. Both are normal. If a person is not soaking through pads or soaking through less than 2 pads every 2 hours, they should be told it is normal to have some bleeding and to call back if they are soaking through 2 pads every 2 hours.

***Call Transfer** - If a person is completely soaking through 2 pads every 2 hours, you should forward the call to the provider on call.

"I took the misoprostol a few hours ago and am still having heavy bleeding and passing large blood clots"

***Ask - "How many pads have you soaked through?"**

If a person is not soaking through pads or soaking through less than 2 pads every 2 hours, they should be told it is normal to have some bleeding and to call back if they are soaking through 2 pads every 2 hours.

***Call Transfer** - If a person is soaking through 2 pads every 2 hours, you should forward the call to the provider on call.

"I had my medication abortion a while ago and I'm still bleeding."

***Ask - "Have you been feeling dizzy, had trouble breathing, or fainted?"**

If a person says no to all of the above, proceed to the next question about appointment time

***Call Transfer** - If a person says yes to any of the above, forward the call to the provider on call.

***Ask - "When was your appointment?"**

If their appointment was less than 6 weeks ago, proceed to the next question about bleeding amount

***Call Transfer** - If their appointment was more than 6 weeks ago, forward the call to the provider on call.

***Ask** - *“How many pads have you soaked through?”*

If a person is not soaking through pads or soaking through less than 2 pads every 2 hours, they should be told it is normal to bleed for up to 6 weeks after an abortion and to call back if they are soaking through 2 pads every 2 hours or feel dizzy, have trouble breathing or pass out.

***Call Transfer** - If a person is soaking through 2 pads every 2 hours, you should forward the call to the provider on call.

GI Issues

“I vomited after I took the first pill (mifepristone)”

***Ask** - *“How long after taking the first pill did you vomit?”*

If it has been more than 1 hour, you can reassure the patient that their body had time to fully absorb the medication.

***Call Transfer** - If they vomited less than 1 hour after taking the first pill, forward the call to the provider on call

“I took/inserted the four pills (misoprostol) and I keep vomiting/having diarrhea”

***Ask** - *“How long ago did you take or insert the four pills?”*

If it has been less than 24 hours, you can reassure the patient that it is normal to vomit/have diarrhea for up to 24 hours after taking the misoprostol. Encourage them to drink water and call back if symptoms do not get better after 24 hours.

***Call Transfer** - If it has been more than 24 hours, forward the call to the provider on call.

Pain

"I swallowed the first pill (mifepristone) and now I'm cramping"

***Reassure** - "Some people have cramps after they take the first pill and that's normal."

Encourage the patient to take the pain medication they were prescribed or what they normally use for period cramps.

"I took/inserted the four pills (misoprostol) in my cheek/vagina and now I'm cramping"

***Ask** - "How long ago did you take/insert the four pills (misoprostol)?"

If it has been less than 24 hours, reassure the patient that it is normal to have cramping.

Encourage them to take the pain medication they were prescribed and tell them to call back if the cramping continues after 24 hours.

***Call Transfer** - If it has been more than 24 hours, transfer the call to the provider on call.

Timing

"I wasn't able to take/insert the four (misoprostol) pills on time and now it has been more than 72 hours since I swallowed the first pill (mifepristone)."

***Reassure** - The patient should take/insert the four pills (misoprostol) as soon as they are able. They do not need to return to the clinic for more of the first pill (mifepristone).

***Call Transfer** - If a patient says they have changed their mind and do not want to take the four pills at all, forward the call to the provider on call.

"I had the four pills (misoprostol) in my cheek, but I accidentally swallowed them before the 30 minutes was up."

***Reassure** - The misoprostol is still safe and effective if swallowed. They should call back if they do not have any bleeding within 48 hours.

Fever

"I have a fever"

***Ask** - "What is your temperature?"

If a patient has a temperature of less than 100.4F (38C), you can reassure them that this is normal.

If the patient has a temperature of more than 100.4F (38C), proceed to the next question about timing.

***Ask** - "How long ago did you take/insert the four pills (misoprostol)?"

If a patient took/inserted misoprostol less than 24 hours ago, it is normal for them to still have a fever.

***Call Transfer** - If a patient took/inserted misoprostol more than 24 hours ago, transfer the call to the provider on call.

Pregnancy & Sex

"I came in for a medication abortion a few weeks ago and I had unprotected sex recently. I'm worried I could get pregnant."

***Call Transfer** - If this occurs at any time after their medication abortion, transfer this call to the provider on call.

"I came in for a medication abortion and I still feel pregnant."

***Ask** "When was your appointment?"

If their appointment was less than 2 weeks ago, reassure them that it can take up to 2 weeks for pregnancy symptoms to go away. Tell them to call back if they continue to feel pregnant after 2 weeks have passed.

***Call Transfer** - If their appointment was more than 2 weeks ago, transfer the call to the provider on call.

Feelings

"I swallowed the first pill (mifepristone), but now I changed my mind."

***Call Transfer** - If this occurs at any time after their medication abortion, transfer this call to the provider on call.

"I took the abortion pill a while ago and I've been feeling like I need someone to talk to."

Patients can text the Exhale support line at 617-749-2948

(U.S. Pacific Time)

Mon-Fri 3 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Saturdays 1 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Sundays 3 p.m. – 7 p.m.