



## ALTERNATIVES, BENEFITS AND RISKS OF ABORTIONCARE

Falls Church Healthcare Center provides abortioncare services by Medication (to 10 weeks) or Procedural Abortions (to 15 weeks). Please review this information carefully and review the additional information and videos in our website's Patient Center. You will have opportunities to discuss this important information with your Patient Educator during your virtual Telehealth appointment or in person on the day of your abortioncare.

### **ALTERNATIVES TO ABORTIONCARE:**

We trust that our patients can consider the alternatives, benefits and risks to make an informed choice about their pregnancy.

If you are pregnant, you have three basic choices:

Choice A: Continue the pregnancy to become a parent.

Choice B: Continue the pregnancy and arrange for temporary foster care or an adoption, either within your family or through an agency.

Choice C: End the pregnancy now by having an abortion.

In addition to abortioncare, Falls Church Healthcare Center provides miscarriage management, interim prenatal care, referrals for pre-natal care and adoption facilitation services as part of our gynecology and reproductive health practice.

The decision of which abortioncare method to choose is a completely personal choice. There are two common, very safe methods for ending a pregnancy:

**Medication abortion** in which you ingest pills; one in our office the other at your home

**Procedural abortion** in which a clinician uses aspiration techniques to empty your uterus in our office

### **BENEFITS TO ABORTIONCARE:**

Abortion has various benefits, depending upon the individual:

- Abortion allows you to have freedom to determine when, if and how you want to be pregnant.
- Abortion allows you to resume your normal activities in a short time after the procedure, whether medication abortion or procedural abortion.
- Abortion allows you to plan for/choose when is the best time to be pregnant, considering your economic, emotional and physical health.

**Benefits of medication abortion.** It is a safe and effective way to end a pregnancy. It can be completed in the privacy of your home and does not require a pelvic exam. **How well does medication abortion work?** It depends how far along you are in your pregnancy. The boxes below tell you how well medication abortion works by week of pregnancy

<b>8 weeks or less</b>	About 98 out of 100 times
<b>From 8 to 9 weeks</b>	About 96 out of 100 times
<b>From 9 to 10 weeks</b>	About 91 to 93 out of 100 times

**Benefits of procedural abortion:** It is a safe and effective way to end a pregnancy. With the aspiration procedure, the abortion is completed by the time you leave the medical office. **How well does aspiration abortion work?** The procedure is almost 100% effective, you can expect to no longer be pregnant when you leave the medical office after your procedure.

### **RISKS OF PREGANCY AND ABORTIONCARE:**

#### **GENERAL SAFETY:**

According to the best medical evidence available, abortion is safer than getting a dental procedure or cosmetic surgery and much safer than childbirth. According to that evidence, in the United States, a woman is about 15 to 25 times more likely to die in childbirth than she is during an abortion. (*National Abortion Federation*)

#### **GENERAL RISKS:**

All medical procedures have known and unknown risks. Whether a pregnancy ends by abortion, miscarriage, or childbirth – risks, complications, adverse events and side effects are possible. Whether a pregnancy ends by abortion, miscarriage, or birth, there are risks to one's health. Weighing the alternatives, benefits and risks is a personal process. Please refer back to our website ([fallschurchhealthcare.com](http://fallschurchhealthcare.com)) if you are unsure about your decision. Complications of pregnancy, including death are greater from childbirth than from induced abortion.

## ALTERNATIVES, BENEFITS AND RISKS OF ABORTIONCARE (continued)

**Patients receiving procedural abortions:** 97% report no complications; 2.5% have minor complications that can be handled at the medical office; and less than 0.5% have a more serious complication that requires some additional procedures and/or hospitalization. **Patients receiving medication abortions** have an excellent safety profile as well, with serious complications occurring in less than 0.5% of cases. (*National Abortion Federation*)

There are risks involved with abortion just as there are risks associated with any medical procedure:

- Risk of Infection: Abortion (whether spontaneous, surgical or medical) as well as menstruations and childbirth create conditions that increase risk of infection. Most infections are successfully treated with antibiotics when identified promptly.
- Known and unknown side effects from administered medications
- Emergency treatment for any complication
- Tubal (ectopic) pregnancy
- Hemorrhage
- Emotional reactions

### **SPECIFIC RISKS:**

**DURING AN ASPIRATION ABORTION** (Procedural) the entrance to the uterus (cervix) is slowly opened with smooth, rounded instruments (dilators). The pregnancy is then removed using gentle aspiration (suction). Aspiration abortion is very safe and successful; over 99% of all patients experience a complete abortion.

Although rare, possible adverse events (complications) documented throughout the U.S and Canada include:

- Hematometra: 1 in 100 cases. Blood clots accumulating in the uterus that cause persistent bleeding and severe cramping. Can easily be treated with a repeat aspiration procedure, medication or simply monitoring.
- Uterine infection: 1 in 100 cases. Routinely treated with antibiotics.
- Cervical Tear: 1 in 500 cases. May be self-healing or repaired with stitches during procedure.
- Perforation: 1 in 1,000 cases. A puncture or tear to the wall of the uterus or other organs. May be self-healing or may require surgical repair or, rarely, hysterectomy (1 in 10,000 cases).
- Missed Abortion: 3 in 1,000 cases. Pregnancy continued and requires the abortion to be repeated. Risk of Failure: Studies have proven a failed abortion is rare but can easily be completed here at the Center for no additional cost. Treatment could be additional medication, repeated testing or a repeated aspiration.
- Incomplete abortion: 1 in 100 cases. Clots from the pregnancy remains in the uterus. Can easily be treated with a repeat aspiration procedure, medication or simply monitoring.
- Excessive bleeding: 1 in 2,000 cases. May require a blood transfusion.
- Death: 1 in 160,000 cases. These rare deaths are usually the result of such things as adverse reactions to anesthesia, medications, embolism, untreated infection, or uncontrollable bleeding.

**DURING A MEDICATION ABORTION** ("The Pill") two medicines are used to end your pregnancy: Mifepristone is taken in our office; Misoprostol is taken at home to help your uterus expel the ended pregnancy. Medication abortion is very safe and successful; over 96% of all patients experience a complete expulsion of the pregnancy within two weeks.

Although rare, possible adverse events (complications) include:

- Failure of the medications to end the pregnancy: less than 2 of 100 cases. Failure require retreatment or an aspiration procedure to complete the abortion.
- Incomplete abortion: 6 in 100 cases. The incomplete expulsion of the products of conception may require additional medication, monitoring or an aspiration procedure to complete emptying of the uterus.
- Excessive bleeding: less than 1 in 100 cases. May require additional medication, monitoring or an aspiration procedure, and extremely rarely a transfusion.
- Uterine infection: less than 1 in 200 cases. Will require the use of antibiotics.
- Death secondary to toxic shock infection with *Clostridium sordellii* (has occurred in less than 0.001% of cases in the U.S. & Canada).
- Risk of Failure: Studies have proven a slow or failed abortion is rare but can easily be completed here at the Center for no additional cost. Treatment could be additional medication, repeated testing or an aspiration procedure. It is important that you agree to have additional treatment if the medication abortion fails.
- Be advised: There is no verifiable medical evidence that medication abortion can be reversed.