

Abortion care

Information for the public

Published: 25 September 2019

www.nice.org.uk

Having an abortion: the care you should expect

Abortion is a simple, safe and commonly performed procedure. However, uncertainty about who to contact, fear of negative attitudes, and long waiting times can make it difficult to access abortion services, and this guideline aims to address these problems.

We want this guideline to make a difference if you're having an abortion by making sure that:

- waiting times are as short as possible
- you can contact abortion services directly if you want to, without having to talk to your GP or another healthcare professional
- you have a choice between medical abortion (taking medicines) and surgical abortion (having an operation), with support and advice to help you choose
- you are given balanced information at every stage
- you can get counselling and support if you want it
- advice and help with contraception is offered straightaway.

Helping you make decisions about your care

Your healthcare professionals should give you the information you need to make decisions about your care. This information should be clear and understandable, and your healthcare professionals should also talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns. They should also:

- treat you with sensitivity and respect your privacy and confidentiality
- prepare you for what to expect during and after the abortion and explain what to do if a problem occurs afterwards
- explain what support is available after the abortion, if you need it.

Helping you decide the type of abortion

If you're having an abortion, you can usually choose between taking medicines (known as a medical abortion) or having an operation (called a surgical abortion). There are pros and cons to each option. We've produced the [decision aids](#) to help you discuss these methods with your healthcare professionals, so you can decide which option is right for you.

If you can't understand the information you are given, tell your healthcare professional.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Where can I find out more?

The [NHS website](#) has more information about abortion.

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [National Unplanned Pregnancy Advisory Service \(NUPAS\)](#), 0333 004 6666
- [British Pregnancy Advisory Service \(BPAS\)](#), 03457 30 40 30
- [Marie Stopes UK](#), 0345 300 8090

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with women who have had an abortion and staff who support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

ISBN: 978-1-4731-3540-6