

Comparison of Early Abortion Options

Medication Abortion

Aspiration Abortion

How far along in the pregnancy can I be?

6 to 9 weeks (63 days) from the first day of your last menstrual period.

6 to 20 weeks from the first day of day of your last menstrual period.

Is it safe?

With both medication and aspiration abortions, there is a small risk of complications, but abortion is at least 10 times safer than continuing a pregnancy.

Is follow-up required?

Yes. You will need to complete follow-up in 6 weeks to ensure the pregnancy has ended. This will involve a urine test, a blood test or a vaginal ultrasound.

No. The doctor will ensure the abortion is complete during your appointment. You are not required to return to the clinic for follow-up unless you have concerns.

How is the abortion done?

Medication causes the abortion. Heavy bleeding with clots is common as the pregnancy is passed, and this can continue for several hours.

The doctor opens the cervix and removes the pregnancy from the uterus using instruments and suction. This usually takes 5-10 minutes.

How painful is it?

Cramps can be very strong for a number of hours during the medication abortion. Pain medication (such as Tylenol and Advil) can help.

You will be given local anesthetic and IV sedation during the procedure, and this will help relieve pain. You may feel some cramps during the procedure and right afterwards.

How much will I bleed?

You could have light to heavy bleeding for 1-4 weeks after either type of abortion.

Can the abortion fail?

The medication works 97% of the time.

The aspiration is successful over 99% of the time.

Can I still have children afterwards?

YES. Neither type of abortion lowers your chances of getting and staying pregnant in the future.

Medication Abortion

Aspiration Abortion

Pros and Cons of Each Type

PROS

1. No instruments in your body
2. No anesthesia is given
3. It may feel more like a miscarriage
4. You can choose to have someone with you while you are at home, or you can be alone.
5. You can drive yourself home after the appointment.

CONS

1. It takes longer to complete the abortion
2. Bleeding can be very heavy and cramps can be severe. This can last for hours.
3. Other side effects of the medication include flu-like symptoms which may be unpleasant.
4. You may need to take more time off from work or school to manage the side effects.
5. You may see the pregnancy tissue as the abortion happens at home.

PROS

1. Single step process that is over in a few minutes
2. Anesthesia is given
3. There is less risk of a failed abortion or going to the hospital.
4. Medical staff are with you during the abortion.
5. It can be done later in the pregnancy.

CONS

1. A physician inserts instruments inside the uterus.
2. Anesthetics and sedation can cause side effects, such as drowsiness and dizziness.
3. You cannot drive yourself home as you will be sedated (legally impaired for 24 hours).
4. You need to fast (no food or drink) on the day of the procedure. You can eat and drink normally once it is over.