

## RU-486 (ABORTION PILL)

**Also known as “the abortion pill,” RU486 is used for a medical abortion.**

A medical abortion causes the termination of a pregnancy by using a combination of medications. The CDC updated guidelines now allow women to take the medication 21 days later into a pregnancy, increasing the allowable window from 49 days from last menstrual period to 70 days from last menstrual period.

The FDA also decreased the dosage of one of the drugs on the market that medical societies previously criticized as being too high. In most states, the number of doctor’s visits women will have to make in cases of medical abortion is now reduced to two days. Ultrasound is used to determine if the pregnancy is in the uterus and the gestational age obtained will ensure the 70 days is adhered to.

An example of your abortion appointment might include your health care provider giving your first medicine, Mifepristone at the clinic on the day your abortion is scheduled. Mifepristone works by blocking the hormone progesterone. Without progesterone, the uterine lining breaks down and your pregnancy cannot continue.

The second medicine given is misoprostol. It causes the uterus to contract and empty. You'll take the second medicine 24-48 hours after taking mifepristone. Your health care provider will give you instructions on how and when to take the second medicine. Misoprostol will cause you to have cramps and bleed heavily.

You may see large blood clots and/or tissue as your pregnancy is expelled. More than half of women abort within four or five hours after taking the second medicine. For others, it takes longer. Most women abort within a few days. It's normal to have some bleeding or spotting for up to four weeks after the abortion.

The medications are taken to end a viable pregnancy.

### **It is NOT the same as the “morning-after pill”**

Things to Consider:

- Most medical abortions using mifepristone are completed within a few days outside of a medical environment.

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**\*\*If this method fails, a surgical abortion will be required.**

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### **Some Side Effects of Medical Abortions are:**

- Intense cramping of the uterus/pelvic pain
  - Vaginal bleeding
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- Headache
  - Weakness/Fatigue
  - Initial relief and then eventual emotional/psychological distress
  - Nausea, may lead to vomiting
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**Important Risks with a Medical Abortion include:**

- Hemorrhaging requiring treatment with an operation (soaking through two thick full-size sanitary pads per hour for two hours).
  - Diarrhea, with or without fever.
  - Fever of 100.4 or higher for more than 4 hours.
  - Incomplete removal of the fetus, placenta or contents of the uterus.
  - You may see the fetus when it is expelled.
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- Severe infection in the blood stream after taking the abortion pill and having misoprostol inserted vaginally. Clostridium sordellii was introduced which led to death after the infection spread.

If you choose a medical abortion, be sure the provider is a licensed medical clinic and has the ability to provide a surgical abortion if one is needed. Find out if a licensed OB/GYN physician will be administering the procedure.

See what type of after-care, both physical and emotional, they provide, if any. Try to speak with someone who has used the services of that provider in order to find out what their experience was like.

We also recommend you get tested for STD's to prevent an active infection from spreading.

You will also need a blood test to find out your blood type (if you don't already know it). Ask for information about blood type incompatibilities and the need for a Rhogam injection. If your blood is found to be Rh negative you will need an injection of Rhogam after your abortion. Rhogam prevents antibodies from being formed in your blood that would cause problems with future pregnancies.

Alternatives Women's Center also suggests that you **know your legal rights**. To receive information on patient rights, please call or **schedule an appointment** with our professional staff for a confidential consultation.