**What is Misoprostol?**

Misoprostol is a medication used all over the world to induce abortions and to treat gastric ulcers. It is sold in pharmacies under the names of Cytotec, Isovent, Msoclear, MisoFem, Cyrux or Misprral. In most African countries it is registered to treat and prevent heavy bleeding after giving birth.

Even if the woman feels she is not pregnant anymore, it is important to make sure the abortion was successful. Women should either do an ultrasound after the medical abortion or do a pregnancy test 3-4 weeks after the abortion.

Misoprostol works to terminate a pregnancy in about every 9 out of 10 women.

**In case the medication did not work**

In case the woman doesn’t bleed, has little bleeding (less than menstruation and without clots) and or continues to have pregnancy symptoms after using the pills it is likely she is still pregnant. She should do an ultrasound as soon as possible to check if the pregnancy continues or not, if this isn’t possible she can use the pills again.

Repeat the abortion by repeating Medical Abortion (Mifepristone and Misoprostol or Misoprostol Alone) or by having Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA). There is a very small risk of birth defects if pregnancy continues after taking Misoprostol.

**After the abortion**

After the abortion, a woman should expect light bleeding for 1-3 weeks, but every woman is different.

Women are advised not to insert anything into the vagina (tampons), have bath and sex until heavy bleeding stops, approximately for 2 days, after a medication abortion.

A woman can get pregnant immediately after an abortion! If she doesn’t want to get pregnant immediately she can start good contraception to prevent a new unwanted pregnancy.

**Organizational Information**

**Women Help Women**

- Website: [https://womenhelp.org/](https://womenhelp.org/)
- Email: info@womenhelp.org
- Twitter: @WomenHelpOrg
- Facebook: WomenHelpWomenInternational

**MAMA Network: Mobilizing Activists around Medical Abortion (MAMA)**

- Website: [www.mamanetwork.org](http://www.mamanetwork.org)
**MISOPROSTOL, WHAT CAN IT BE USED FOR?**

Safely inducing abortion. Post miscarriage and post abortion care (to complete an incomplete abortion). Preventing and treating post-partum hemorrhage (PPH - severe bleeding after giving birth). Used to prevent gastric ulcer.

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

Misoprostol makes the uterus contract, softens and opens the cervix, which causes a process like a miscarriage.

**WHEN CAN IT BE USED FOR SAFE ABORTION?**

In the first 12 weeks of pregnancy counting from the first day of the last menstrual cycle.

**WHAT CAN IT BE USED FOR?**

- Safely inducing abortion.
- Post miscarriage and post abortion care (to complete an incomplete abortion).
- Preventing and treating post-partum hemorrhage (PPH - severe bleeding after giving birth).
- Used to prevent gastric ulcer.

**HOW IS IT ADMINISTERED TO INDUCE AN ABORTION?**

- A woman needs 12 pills. Misoprostol should be taken in doses of 4 pills every 3 hours:
  - Place 4 misoprostol pills under the tongue for 30 minutes to dissolve.
  - Do not swallow, let it dissolve.
- If the abortion hasn’t occurred 3 hours later, the woman can use additional doses every 3 hours until expulsion.

**WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED AFTER USING THE MEDICATION?**

- Cramps and vaginal bleeding stronger than during normal menstruation.
- 80% of cases, the expulsion of the pregnancy happens during the first 24 hours.
- The longer the woman has been pregnant, the stronger the bleeding and cramps might be.
- Painkillers can be taken at the same time as the first dose of misoprostol. Ibuprofen is the most effective. Paracetamol/acetaminophen can be used in addition.

**POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS**

Within the first 24 hours the following symptoms may occur: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever with or without chills, headache and/or dizziness. These side effects are not dangerous and will disappear within a few hours.

**WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS (COMPICATIONS)?**

- Excessive bleeding (2 or 3 pads filled per hour for more than 2 or 3 hours in a row)
- High Fever of more than 39 Celsius or 38 Celsius for more than 24 hours
- Strong pain that does not go away with painkillers a few days after taking the medicines
- Smelly, abnormal vaginal discharge

**WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF COMPLICATIONS?**

Go immediately to a health center.

In case of a medical emergency, medical personnel have the obligation to attend to the person in a timely manner. The treatment for complications is the same as for complications after a miscarriage. It is not possible to see the difference between a miscarriage and an induced abortion with misoprostol. A woman in need of medical care can say she has had a miscarriage.