

Abortion and privacy

Having an abortion is a personal decision, which many people prefer to keep private. It is important not to mention someone's abortion to others without their consent. This includes family members, friends, colleagues and partners. Don't assume the person you are supporting has told other people about their abortion, and remember that it is up to them when, how, and if they choose to talk about their experience with others.



Additional supports and resources

IFPA website

You can find more information about abortion care and the services we offer on our website. Please see www.ifpa.ie or scan the QR code.



IFPA medical support

If the person you are supporting accessed abortion care at one of our clinics and they are worried about their symptoms, they can call us during opening hours to ask for advice.

01 872 7088 – IFPA Dublin City Centre

01 459 7685 – IFPA Tallaght

HSE My Options medical helpline

This free helpline has a nurse available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for medical queries during or after an abortion.

1800 828 010

Post-abortion care check up

The IFPA offers a free post-abortion care check-up phone call with a nurse, usually after two weeks. Anyone who has an abortion can access this check-up.

0818 49 50 51

Specialist pregnancy counselling

The IFPA provides free, non-judgmental, confidential counselling in person or over the phone. Counselling can be a support before the first appointment or between appointments. We also provide post-abortion counselling. Partners can access this service too. The IFPA is a pro-choice organisation and will always support the pregnant person's decision.

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Supporting someone through their abortion

An early medical abortion companion guide



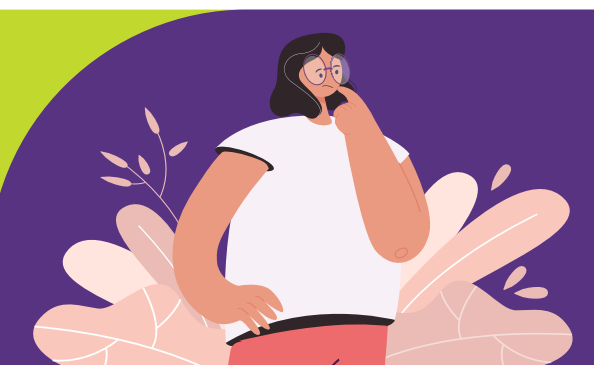
Abortion is a common form of reproductive healthcare that many people experience in their lifetime. More than 8,000 people accessed abortion care in Ireland last year.

This guide provides information and tips to help you support someone during their early medical abortion.

What is early medical abortion?

Early medical abortion is the process of ending a pregnancy using two medications: mifepristone and misoprostol.

- ▶ The first medication, mifepristone, is usually taken in the clinic.
- ▶ The second medication, misoprostol, is usually taken at home 1–2 days later.



How to access early medical abortion

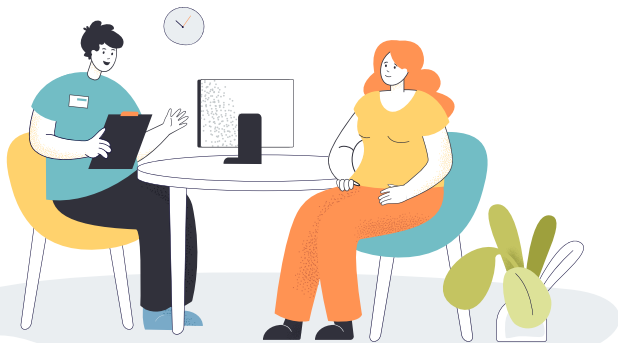
In Ireland, a woman or pregnant person can have an abortion for any pregnancy that is less than 12 weeks. The decision is theirs and they don't have to explain their reasons to anyone.

People accessing abortion care must attend two appointments with a doctor. Between the first and second appointment, there is a mandatory three-day waiting period. This can be a stressful time for many, but it is imposed by law and unfortunately cannot be waived.

Up to nine weeks of pregnancy, early medical abortion care can be accessed from:

- ▶ providing GPs
- ▶ family planning clinics
- ▶ women's health centres.

If a person is more than nine weeks pregnant, the doctor will refer them to a hospital for their abortion care.



At the IFPA, the first appointment is usually over the phone and the second is in the clinic. At the second appointment, the person usually takes the first medication with the doctor and receives the second medication to take at home 1–2 days later.

In addition to the medication, they receive a Home Care Pack which includes information leaflets, painkillers, pads and a low-sensitivity pregnancy test.

What happens after taking the medication?

After taking the first medication, the person may experience some light bleeding or no bleeding at all.

After taking the second medication, they are likely to experience strong, painful cramping and bleeding. The bleeding will usually be heavier than a normal period for a day or two and may contain clots and tissue. Some people may also experience vomiting, nausea, diarrhea and a high temperature. Light to moderate bleeding is likely to continue for two to four weeks following an early medical abortion.

• How will they feel emotionally?

Everyone's experience of abortion is different. In addition to the physical discomfort or pain, some people may feel low during this time, as their body adjusts to changing hormone levels.

In the days and weeks afterwards, some people may feel a sense of relief while others may experience a sense of loss. Some may feel both of these things. All of these emotions are extremely common. There is no right or wrong way for a person to feel during or after their abortion.

Things you can do to support someone having an early medical abortion

Emotional support

- ▶ Be kind, caring and empathetic.
- ▶ Listen to the person you are supporting. Let them tell you how they feel and what they need.
- ▶ Be comfortable with silence. Some people may not want to talk and that's okay.
- ▶ Only offer advice if it has been asked for.
- ▶ Don't make any judgement on their choice or make light of their decision.

Practical support

- ▶ Offer to take them to and from the appointment. You can go into the clinic, but the appointment is confidential, and they will see the doctor on their own.
- ▶ Offer to take care of their children, if needed.
- ▶ Offer to shop for necessities like painkillers or maternity pads.
- ▶ Help them figure out their preferred place to have the abortion.
- ▶ Think about what would make them feel comfortable; for example, a cosy blanket, a hot water bottle, a cup of tea.
- ▶ Plan ways to distract them from the pain or discomfort such as watching a film together or putting on a playlist.
- ▶ Treat them to something you know they like, such as flowers, their favourite tea or chocolate.
- ▶ Ask if it would be helpful for you to read the information in the Home Care Pack.
- ▶ Make a plan for what you will do if they need medical assistance.



At all times, respect the privacy and boundaries of the person you are supporting.