



# How to Manage Side Effects of Medication Abortion

MIFE = mifepristone  
MISO = misoprostol  
h = hours  
d = days


## Vaginal Bleeding & Discharge

What to expect	What you can do	 When to seek help
Starts <b>1-48h</b> after MISO (minimal bleeding after MIFE)	Use sanitary pads for heavy bleeding (should diminish upon pregnancy termination)	<b>Heavy vaginal bleeding</b> (saturates $\geq 2$ sanitary pads per hour for 2 consecutive hours)
Heavier than menstrual period	<b>Do not use tampons</b>	Dizziness or racing heart rate
Heavy bleeding lasts <b>2-4h</b> (light bleeding or spotting can last until next menstrual period)	Use panty liners for light bleeding (up to 30d after treatment)	Heavy bleeding $> 16d$
<b>May contain blood clots</b>		<b>Foul-smelling vaginal discharge</b>

## Pain & Cramping

What to expect	What you can do	 When to seek help
Starts <b>within 4h</b> of MISO	Comfort care: rest, hot pack, massage, etc.	Prolonged cramping $> 16d$
Greater than menstrual period	OTC options: ibuprofen, naproxen (acetaminophen is less effective alone; may be combined with codeine)	Cramping or pain not improved with pain medications
Increased pain up to 24h; discomfort may persist		

## Other

What to expect	What you can do	 When to seek help
Possible gastrointestinal side effects (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea), headache, fever or chills	Can manage with OTC options (if pregnancy nausea is present, take anti-nauseant before MIFE and MISO)	<b>Chills or fever <math>&gt; 38^{\circ}\text{C}</math> for <math>&gt; 6h</math></b> and malaise (weakness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea)
Self-limiting (usually after MISO)	Can reduce gastrointestinal side effects by taking MISO <b>after a snack</b>	Feeling sick with or without fever $> 24h$ after MISO (possible infection)

### REFERENCES:

Judith Soon & Nevena Rebic. Pharmacist resource guide for medical abortion. 2018. CART-GRAC 2020.

