

# **Surgical Termination of Pregnancy (STOP)**

## **Information for Women**

**Welcome to the National Women's Gynaecology Service**  
**Tena Koe Noho Ora Mai**

A Surgical Termination of Pregnancy can be done under either general or local anaesthesia.

### **Preparing for the procedure:**

You must not eat, drink (excluding water), chew gum or smoke for 6 hours prior to the procedure. You may drink sips of water up to 2 hours prior to the procedure.

It is advisable to have a shower on the morning of the procedure and please do not wear makeup, nail polish or jewellery

### **What happens after my abortion?**

If your abortion was performed under general anaesthetic you will wake up in the recovery room. You may have an oxygen mask on your face that will be removed once you are fully awake. Your blood pressure, pulse and vaginal bleeding will be checked. When everything is satisfactory you will go to Ward 97 or to the Transition Lounge. After you have passed urine and tolerated oral fluids you will be allowed to get dressed and go home. You should not drive for 24 hours after the anaesthetic. Please arrange to be driven home and for an adult to be with you or nearby for the 24 hours after the procedure. We recommend you have the following day off work and see your G.P. for a check up in 2 weeks.

### **What are the risks in having an abortion?**

Termination of pregnancy is a safe procedure in New Zealand with very few serious complications, however as with all operations, complications may occur. About 5% of women who have an abortion will need medical attention and some may require re admission to hospital for treatment.

### **The most common complications are:**

- Blood clots collecting in the uterus may need to be removed by another suction procedure. This is similar to the abortion procedure and occurs for 1 out of every 100 women having an abortion
- Infection inside the uterus which is usually easily treated (2%)
- The abortion has not completely emptied the uterus of pregnancy tissue with the procedure needing to be repeated (2%)

**Much less common complications are:**

- Perforation of the wall of the uterus (and/or other organs) which usually heals itself but may require surgical repair. In extremely rare situations a Hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) may be required
- A tear in the cervix, which can usually be repaired simply with stitches at the time of the abortion
- Excessive bleeding due to failure of the uterus to contract which may require a blood transfusion
- In very rare circumstances the pregnancy continues and may require the procedure to be repeated.

**What do I need when I get home?**

Ensure you can continue to rest quietly for the rest of the day. Contact the unit staff if you have any questions or concerns.

To help avoid infection, our advice for the next 10 days is:

- Use pads instead of tampons
- Avoid sexual intercourse until bleeding stops
- Shower instead of bathing
- Avoid swimming pools or spa pools
- Avoid heavy lifting or strenuous exercise

When you feel ready you may return to your usual daily activities.

**What physical or emotional changes might I expect after my abortion?****Physically:**

- Some bleeding- it may be very light or like your normal period. It may last 1-2 days or up to 14 days. The bloody flow may vary during this time. You might also notice some blood clots.
- Some crampy pain can be common in the first 24-48 hours. You can take Panadol every 6 hours for this
- Some women may find that they are tender until their hormone levels reduce. Avoid massaging your breasts and wear a firm bra

**Emotionally:**

Women can experience a mixture of emotions after an abortion. Counselling information and advice is available. To contact a social worker

Phone 307 4949 and ask for Social Worker for women's health

**If you feel unwell after your abortion:**

Ring your GP or Family Planning Clinic if you have:

- A temperature of 37.5 degrees or more for longer than 3 hours or feel feverish-feel unusually hot or cold
- Severe cramps or constant pain in your abdomen (tummy)
- Heavy bleeding needing more than one change of pad an hour
- Numerous blood clots larger than a \$2 coin.

If you are unable to contact your doctor after hours, contact your local hospital:

**Auckland City Hospital** (Central Residents)

Women's Assessment Unit Phone: 367 0000 extn 25900

**Middlemore Hospital** (Eastern + Southern Residents)

Emergency Department Phone: 276 0000

**North Shore Hospital** (Northshore + West Residents)

Emergency Department Phone: 4868900