

Instructions: Preparing for a procedure to end or remove a pregnancy at BC Women's Hospital

These are general instructions to prepare for and recover following a procedure. You will be given instructions at the time of your appointment.

Preparing for Your Appointment

Fasting

- **Do not eat** anything for **6 hours before** you arrive.
- You may drink **clear liquids** until **1 hour before** your arrival time.

Clear liquids you **CAN** drink:

- Water
- Apple juice (no pulp)
- Gatorade or other clear sports drinks
- Black coffee (no milk, cream, or whitener)
- Black tea (no milk, cream, or whitener)

Liquids you **CANNOT** drink:

- Milk, cream, or whiteners
- Any juice with pulp (aloe, coconut, mango, orange, etc.)
- Smoothies or protein shakes

If fasting is not followed, we may need to delay or rebook your procedure for safety.

Important: If your procedure uses general anesthesia, or if you take a GLP-1 medication (such as Ozempic, Wegovy, Rybelsus, Mounjaro), you will be given specific fasting instructions when you book your appointment.

Things to note

- If you feel sick (fever, chills, cough, vomiting), **call the clinic before your appointment.** Abortion and pregnancy-ending care are essential, so you may still be able to come. We will talk with you about whether it is safer to continue or rebook.
- Try not to drink alcohol or use recreational drugs for **24 hours** before your appointment. If you have used anything, please tell us **what you used and when** - it helps us keep you safe.

How to arrive

- If possible, arrive **clean and comfortable** (for example, recently bathed or showered).
- Wear **loose, comfortable clothing** and **flat shoes**.
- Bring **warm socks** and a **sweater or layer**; the clinic can feel cool.
- Avoid scented products.
- Bring only what you need; there is no locked space for valuables.

Phones and devices

- You may **text quietly** on your phone.
- **No phone calls, photos, videos, or recording** are allowed anywhere inside the clinic space.

Getting home after your procedure

- You **cannot drive for 24 hours** after your procedure because of the medications used.
- Plan a safe ride home with a **support person, taxi, or ride service**.
- If you are having **general anesthesia**, someone **must** take you home.

Supplies at home

- Have **sanitary pads** ready at home.
- Do **not** use tampons for **7 days** after the procedure.

Support people

- Support people must bring **photo ID**.
- They will wait in the nearby waiting room. You will check in **on your own**.
- If you want your support person to join part of your care, tell us, and we will let you know if and when they can come in.
- Children are **not permitted** in the clinic area.

On the day of your appointment

How long will my appointment take?

Every appointment moves at a different pace, depending on your needs and how busy the clinic is that day.

For planning purposes, most people spend:

- **30-45 minutes** talking with the counsellor
- **20-30 minutes** for cervical preparation (*you will **not** have the procedure the same day*)
- **10-20 minutes** getting ready for the procedure
- **8-15 minutes** for the procedure itself
- **About 45 minutes** in recovery
- For pregnancies 12 weeks and up: you will also receive a medication **60 minutes before the procedure**, which adds to your waiting time in our admitting area

Total time estimate

- If you are having **cervical preparation: ~1–1.5 hours**
- If you are having a **procedure for a pregnancy <12 weeks: ~2-2.5 hours**
- If you are having a **procedure for a pregnancy 12+ weeks: ~3-3.5 hours**
- If you are having procedure in our **Gynecology Surgical Services (deep sedation or general anesthesia)**: expect **extra time** before going home.

These times are estimates and can vary.

Before Your Procedure

All appointments start with a conversation with one of our counsellors.

This session helps you understand your choices and supports informed, voluntary consent.

During this time, the counsellor will:

- explain the procedure and what to expect
- review how to care for yourself afterwards
- go through the consent form with you
- answer any questions you have

If you have questions the counsellor cannot answer, they will bring in a nurse or doctor. You can take the time you need, and you can ask for a break at any point.

The role of this conversation is to give you clear information, check understanding, and support **your** decision - not make it for you.

You can ask for:

- more time
- another conversation
- a second opinion
- information in plain language
- an interpreter

Consent is only valid when it is **free, informed, and unpressured**.

Talking about birth control (optional)

Some people want to talk about birth control when ending a pregnancy, and some do not. You **do not** have to choose or start a method unless **you want to**.

If you want to talk about birth control, the counsellor can explain the different methods that are available the day of your appointment or that you can choose to use later, if you prefer.

The counsellor will also tell the doctor which methods you are interested in or have more questions about, so the doctor can:

- review what is safe for you based on your health
- answer any remaining questions
- confirm your consent before anything is provided

You decide what, if anything, feels right for you.

You can become pregnant again soon after a procedure, but you are not expected to prevent pregnancy unless that is your choice.

If you have valid BC MSP, free birth control is available on the day of your procedure if you choose it.

During your procedure

One-day procedures (usually up to ~14 weeks)

- A one-day procedure happens in one visit.
- You will talk with a counsellor, meet your care team, and get medicine to help with comfort.
- The doctor gently opens the cervix and removes the pregnancy using soft suction.
- The procedure is quick, and you rest in the clinic before going home the same day.

Two- or three-day procedures (usually after ~14 weeks)

- These procedures happen over two or three visits. When your appointment is booked, a nurse will explain what to expect in more detail.
- On the first day (or sometimes the first two days), small dilators are placed in the cervix to help it open slowly and safely.
- After your cervix is ready, you come back for the procedure.
- The doctor does the procedure with ultrasound guidance, and you rest in the clinic before going home.

After your procedure

Most people take the next day off work or school. If you need a note, please tell your care team.

Things to avoid

- For 3 hours: try not to smoke
- For 24 hours: do not drive
- For 48 hours: avoid alcohol and recreational drugs
- For 1 week: nothing in the vagina (no tampons, no vaginal sex)
- For 2 weeks: no hot tubs or swimming pools

What you may feel

- Bleeding: Light, heavy, or none at all. Bleeding can last 1-3 weeks or more if you get an IUD. Passing small clots is common.
- Pain or cramping: Some people have pain or cramping for 1-2 weeks. Pain may come and go and can cause nausea. You can take:
 - Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
 - Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) Avoid Aspirin, as it can increase bleeding.
- Chest or breast changes: If your pregnancy was around 17 weeks or more, you may notice leaking from your nipples. If this bothers you or does not go away, call the CARE Clinic.

When to get medical help

Go to an Emergency Department if:

- You soak more than 3 large pads in 2–3 hours, or pass clots bigger than a lemon
- You have a fever over 38°C (100.4°F), chills, worsening pain, or bad-smelling discharge

Call your doctor if:

- You have nausea or vomiting that starts after the procedure and lasts more than 24 hours
- You do not get a period within 7 weeks, unless you chose a Mirena IUD or Depo injection
- Pregnancy symptoms continue after 2 weeks

If you are unsure, you can always call CARE for guidance.

Follow-up care

You do not need a routine follow-up visit if you are recovering well.

If you want a follow-up, you can see:

- your family doctor or nurse practitioner
- a youth clinic

- a walk-in clinic

For a medical follow-up at CARE or to request counselling or support: Call 604-875-2022 or book online.

If you had an IUD inserted

It is important to have the IUD checked in about 6 weeks to make sure it is in place. If you want CARE to do this, call 604-875-2022 or book online.