

# Misoprostol Instructions

## PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

Misoprostol (brand name Cytotec) is an ulcer medication that is used in the management of a miscarriage. The medication is an alternative to dilation and curettage (D&C) or to waiting for a miscarriage to occur naturally. The medication is inserted into the vagina.

Misoprostol works by softening and opening the cervix to help the pregnancy pass. Side effects may include vaginal bleeding, uterine cramping, nausea, vomiting, fever and diarrhea.

You should have another person with you for 12-24 hours after taking misoprostol. It is a good idea to have sanitary pads, medication for pain, a heating pad or hot water bottle, and caffeine-free beverages available. While you are bleeding, you should **not** use a tampon.

### **Bleeding:**

It is normal for the bleeding to get very heavy in the hours after you take misoprostol. The bleeding usually slows down once you have passed the pregnancy. Some women pass blood clots that range in size from small (the size of a quarter) to large (the size of a lemon). If the bleeding soaks through 2 or more pads/hour for more than 2 hours, or if you are feeling light headed or faint, seek medical attention.

After you pass the pregnancy, you may continue to bleed for 7-10 days and then spot for 3-5 more days. These are averages: some women bleed more, some less. Overall the bleeding should get lighter as time passes.

### **Cramping:**

Most women feel cramping within a few hours of taking misoprostol. You may take Ibuprofen for the cramping. If that is not enough, you can add two tablets of plain Tylenol or Tylenol #3 every 4 hours for pain. If you have tried the above recommended medications and are still having severe pain, contact your health care provider.

### **Fever:**

Contact your health care provider if you have a fever over 38 degrees Celsius that persists beyond 24 hours after taking misoprostol.

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### **Nausea or vomiting and diarrhea:**

You can take Gravol for the nausea. The diarrhea usually disappears within 24 hours.

### **D&C:**

The medication may not work in all cases (10 to 20% failure rate). Occasionally it is necessary to have an urgent D&C due to significant pain or bleeding. Some women continue to bleed and may need a D&C as late as 2 months after the have passed the pregnancy.

### **Who to contact:**

Between 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday, call the Clinic at **905-895-4521, ext. 2724** for any concerns. Outside of office hours, proceed to the Emergency Department at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

### **Follow-up:**

Follow up is important to make sure that the pregnancy has completely passed. Some women will need a second dose of the medication at follow-up.

You will be seen again for a repeat ultrasound and blood work.

**APPOINTMENT DATE:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ **APPOINTMENT TIME:** \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_