

Abortion Service

Information Leaflet for Women

Pregnancy Counselling Clinic

Background Information

Unplanned pregnancy is very common. At least half of all pregnancies are unplanned, and in one in five pregnancies a woman will choose to have an abortion. Abortion can be a difficult choice to make and it can be a very emotional time. Talking to people you trust and making sure you have accurate information and support can help.

Abortion is legal in England, Scotland and Wales. We aim to make your visit to our clinic as safe and stress free as possible.

All our staff are highly professional, well trained, will not judge you and are happy to answer any questions you have

How do I get an abortion locally?

Abortion is available free on the NHS, at Burnley General Teaching Hospital. To arrange a fast, confidential, free appointment for you to talk through your options telephone:

01282 803767

Monday to Thursday from 8am to 6pm

Friday from 8am to 5pm

Excluding bank holidays

Answering machine service in operation outside these hours.

Will anyone else be told about my abortion?

No. The decision to have an abortion is a matter between you and you and your doctor, nurse or health professional. All information and treatment is confidential whatever your age.

If I am under 16, do I have to tell my parents?

No. You can have an abortion without telling your parents. Your health professional will encourage you to involve your parents or carers, or another supportive adult. If you choose not to do this, you can still have an abortion if the doctor/nurse believes it is in your best interests, and that you fully understand what is involved.

All information, advice and services are confidential. However, health professionals will involve Children's Social Care if they suspect you, or another person, are at significant risk of sexual abuse or emotional or physical harm. This is not done without talking to you about this first.

Do I need my partner's agreement?

No. Your partner, or the father of the child, has no legal rights. You can go ahead with an abortion without your partner's knowledge or agreement. Where partners have tried to prevent an abortion by legal action they have failed.

How long will I have to wait?

You should be offered a first appointment within 2 weeks (less than 14 days).

Where will I be seen?

The service is based at Burnley General Teaching Hospital. (The clinic address will be provided once you have an appointment)

What will happen before I have an abortion?

For many women, having an abortion will involve three separate visits:-

At the first visit, an assessment, the doctor or nurse will ask you questions about your medical history, periods, sexual history and contraception use.

An examination will be carried out, with your consent, which includes internal swabs and a scan to confirm the pregnancy dates.

You will know how pregnant you are and the plan for your treatment

You will also:

- Have an opportunity to talk things through if you want to
- Be provided with written information about the different methods of abortion, suitable for your stage of pregnancy
- Be provided with written information about what to expect during and after the abortion
- Be provided with written information about any possible risks or complications relating to the abortion
- Have a blood test to check your blood group (unless we already have a record of this) and for anaemia
- Have a cervical cytology (smear test) if this is due.
- Be asked to sign a consent form to say you agree to the abortion and the procedure being chosen.

Treatment is not usually carried out at this visit. You will usually have the abortion a few days after this.

What does an abortion involve?

There are different abortion procedures which depend on how pregnant you are.

Medical abortion:

This is available up to 18 weeks.

After the assessment visit you need 2 more appointments

Early medical abortion (EMA) up to 9 weeks of pregnancy involves taking drugs to cause an early miscarriage. It does not involve surgery or an anaesthetic. The first visit takes a few minutes. You can usually go home after the second visit.

Medical abortion from 9–18 weeks uses the same drugs as EMA to cause a late miscarriage. The abortion at this stage is usually quick enough for you to return home the same day, but sometimes it is necessary to stay overnight, particularly when the abortion is carried out later in pregnancy.

Surgical abortion:

Manual vacuum aspiration (MVA) local anaesthetic

Available from 6 to 9 weeks. You will need one visit after the assessment

Under local anaesthetic a small tube being inserted into the cervix (neck of the womb) through the vagina to remove the pregnancy. You are awake. You go home about 1 hour later.

General anaesthetic:

Available from 7-13 weeks. This involves a small tube being inserted into the cervix (neck of the womb) through the vagina, under a light general anaesthetic so you are asleep during the procedure. The procedure takes about 5–10 minutes. You will usually go home on the same day a few hours after the abortion has been carried out.

What happens next?

At the end of assessment visit you will know which procedure you are having and when.

You will be given written information about dates and times of appointments as well as information about what to bring with you.

Can I change my mind?

Planning an abortion does not mean you choose to have one. You can change your mind at any time. It is helpful if you cancel your appointment.

If you have taken the first tablet for a medical abortion, there is a risk of an abnormal baby and women are advised to continue with the abortion once they have taken this drug. There may be an increased chance of miscarriage later in the pregnancy

What happens after my abortion?

Written information is provided. Usually your chosen contraception is supplied or an appointment is given to coordinate this.

A follow up appointment or pregnancy test will be arranged if the abortion has not been confirmed.

How do I arrange an appointment?

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References

- 1) Abortion knowing the facts © FPA printed in March 2014
- 2) The Care of Women Requesting Induced Abortion. Evidence-based Guideline No.7. November 2011: Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists.

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