

**Women & Teens Healthcare (WAT)**  
**AFTER-CARE INSTRUCTIONS (Surgical Procedure)**

Date of Procedure: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_

Caring for yourself after an abortion is important. Uterine aspiration, like other surgical procedures, does have a risk of side effects or complications. Although these complications are rare, it is important that you know what to expect and what to do. Please keep this instruction sheet so that you may use it as a reference. Staff are available 24 hours a day to answer your questions or discuss concerns.

During Business Hours (8:30am-5pm): call 305-895-5555

After Hours: You can speak to your medical assistant/counselor who assisted you. You can also call our answering service at 305-895-5555.

**WHAT TO EXPECT**

**ACTIVITY:**

You should go home and rest today. You may resume normal activities immediately. Sometimes, with strenuous activity (like heavy lifting and bending), your bleeding may increase. This doesn't happen for everyone. If you notice that your bleeding increases with strenuous activity, then avoid these activities for two days. Most of the normal side effects can be managed by resting, though most women prefer to take it easy for a day or two after an abortion until able to return to normal activity levels. Let your body be your guide.

**PAD/TAMPON USE:**

Pads should be used for the first few days after your procedure. The rate of bleeding can be observed more easily when pads are used. Tampons can be used once the bleeding has slowed and you are only spotting.

**RETURN OF PERIOD:**

Your first period should occur in 4-6 weeks. If you feel pregnant or do not have a period after 6 weeks, call the office. If you are using hormonal contraception (pills, patch, ring, Depo- Provera, or Nexplanon), your first period can vary depending on method; discuss what to expect with the counselor.

**INTERCOURSE:**

You should not have sexual intercourse until you feel ready. This may mean a few days for some women or several weeks for others. This is up to you. You can get pregnant as soon as 7 days after your abortion, so use the contraceptive method that you discussed with the counselor.

**BATHING:**

You may bathe in a shower or tub at any time. Do not douche.

**SORE BREASTS:**

If your breasts were sore before the abortion, the soreness will usually go away within a week. To feel more comfortable, limit any stimulation to the breast until the soreness goes away and wear a tight-fitting bra or sports bra. Only women who have abortions later in pregnancy (after 16 weeks) will sometimes get breast milk after the abortion. Do not express the milk.

**INFECTION:**

Infection is an uncommon complication, occurring in less than 1 patient in 100. It is usually associated with fever (100.4°F or higher), and sometimes with abdominal cramps and foul-smelling discharge. It can nearly always be treated simply and effectively with antibiotics. It is best to call us to make an appointment. You should take your temperature with a thermometer if you think you have a fever. If it is 100.4°F or higher for

two times in a row (taken four hours apart), or 101°F or higher even once, call the office. The fever may indicate infection and it is URGENT that you report it at once so that the doctor can decide if you need treatment.

#### **BLEEDING:**

Excessive bleeding is very uncommon. The normal amount of bleeding will vary from woman to woman. Some may have very little bleeding or no bleeding at all. Most commonly, women begin bleeding the day of procedure, bleed for 5 to 7 days, then spot for a week. Some women can have spotting for as long as 2 weeks. You may pass clots and bleeding may seem to increase when you get up suddenly or go to the toilet. Do not be alarmed or frightened if you pass any clots. This is normal after having a uterine aspiration. Many women pass clots with their periods every month. If the amount of bleeding increases so that you are soaking one maxi-pad an hour for two hours in a row or passing clots larger than a lemon, call the clinic.

#### **CRAMPING:**

You will probably experience cramping for a few days that is similar to cramping with a menstrual period. Cramping is usually caused by clots in the uterus and as soon as these clots are expelled, the cramping stops. You should be able to obtain relief by taking Motrin (800mg with food or milk every 6 to 8 hours) and by using a heating pad or hot water bottle. You can use Aleve or any generic brand of Naproxen if you prefer. You may use Extra Strength Tylenol if you are allergic to ibuprofen or naproxen. If the cramping is severe or prolonged, and you are not getting relief from any of these methods, call the clinic.

#### **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:**

Feelings of relief, guilt, sadness, elation, or depression are common and may be stronger than normal due to the hormonal changes that occur after an abortion. Most women find these feelings do not last very long. However, if you do have disturbing thoughts about the abortion, or negative feelings that will not go away, consider counseling. It can be helpful to discuss these emotions with your partner or parents or caregivers. If you wish, we can help you find a counselor to help you cope with and resolve these issues so that you can move forward in resuming your life.

#### **FOLLOW UP:**

We do offer a follow-up visit, which is optional, and includes an ultrasound within 3 weeks after your procedure. Although we are happy to see you (at no extra charge), you may prefer to see your regular doctor, especially if you come from a distance (the Islands, another city/state/country). We will be glad to send your regular doctor a letter (with your permission) providing pertinent medical aspects of the abortion. During your follow up exam, we will check you to make sure that everything is OK, and we will make sure that you have a good birth control plan. At this appointment, we can discuss any aspect of the experience that you are unclear about.

#### **REFERRAL OF FAMILY MEMBERS OR FRIENDS:**

Please be assured that your referrals of family members and friends to Women & Teens Healthcare (WAT) will be treated professionally and confidentially. Our mission is to “Provide the highest quality of care, safety and cleanliness to our patients.” We provide the full spectrum of care to our patients through the stages of a women’s reproductive life, including family planning, contraceptive and abortion care, obstetric services, as well as STD testing and treatment. More information can be obtained on our website: [www.womenandteens.com](http://www.womenandteens.com).