

Your visit to Southmead for abortion care



Exceptional healthcare, personally delivered

Vacuum Aspiration Abortion

Please attend Cotswold Ward at Southmead Hospital for your operation.

Date:...../...../..... **Time:** 7am / 11am

Before your appointment

Please leave plenty of time for your journey. The traffic is often very congested and parking is limited at the hospital. Should you be late, it may not be possible to carry out the operation.

- **You must not eat or drink anything at all from; from midnight** the night before your operation (for morning appointments) **or after 06.00 am on the day of your operation** i.e. you may have a LIGHT breakfast before 06.00am (for afternoon appointments). You must not chew gum either. Failure to follow this advice may mean your operation is cancelled.
- Do not smoke on the day of the operation.
- Have a bath or shower before coming in and do not wear any make-up, nail varnish, or jewellery.
- Your admission is planned to be a day case.

You are asked to bring:

- Washing things/toiletries.
- Dressing gown and slippers.
- Overnight clothes.
- Sanitary towels.
- Any prescribed medicines that you use.
- A book or magazine is a good idea.

Your length of stay is likely to be less than six hours.

You must arrange for a responsible adult to collect you from hospital and stay with you that night.

When you arrive

Nursing staff will check your details and that you understand the procedure. If required, you will be given the misoprostol vaginal tablets to soften the cervix. You will usually be seen by the anaesthetist and the surgeon, and then wait for your place on the list. A friend or relative can stay with you while you wait. Before it is your time to go to theatre you will be asked to change into a hospital gown. The abortion usually takes about 10 minutes.

When you wake, you will be in the recovery room. Some periodlike pain is normal at this time. It is usually mild but pain relief will be available if you require it. When you are well enough, you are transferred back to the ward and will be able to drink and have a light snack. Most women are ready to go home within a few hours.

(Full details of the procedure for medical abortion are contained in the other leaflet you have received entitled “Vacuum Aspiration abortion under general anaesthetic“.)

After you go home

Following a general anaesthetic, the effects of the drugs last for several hours and your reaction times will be slow. For this reason you must avoid certain activities for at least 24 hours:

- Do not drive, ride a bicycle or motorbike.
- Do not use machinery.
- Do not boil a kettle, use boiling liquids or cook using heat.
- Do not drink alcohol (but do drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluid).
- Do not lock the bathroom or toilet door in case you feel faint.
- Do not sign a cheque or other documents or make important decisions.

Following the abortion, bleeding may last up to three weeks and you may have spotting for a few weeks after this but it should get lighter and lighter. Use sanitary towels (not tampons). Do not have sex until the bleeding has settled.

After a couple of days, the bleeding should not be heavier than a period.

Important

If you soak more than 2 pads per hour for more than 2 hours in a row you should contact Cotswold Day Surgery Unit for advice - Tel: 0117 414 6792 (or out of hours Cotswold Ward - Tel: 0117 414 6785). In some women, a little pregnancy tissue left in the womb causes heavy or prolonged bleeding and a treatment is needed to deal with this.

In the weeks after an abortion you should seek urgent treatment if you develop any of the following:

- **Lower abdominal pain.**
- **A smelly discharge.**
- **A fever.**

These can be signs of infection and if you are not treated, it can lead to a more severe infection (known as pelvic inflammatory disease). See your GP or go to a clinic (e.g. Central Health Clinic – Tel: 0117 342 6900).

You are fertile immediately after an abortion so it is important to organise a suitable contraception. Your first period will arrive about four weeks later. Remember to attend for your postabortion check-up 2 weeks after the procedure.

**PATIENT
APPROVED** 

How to contact us:

 **Cotswold Ward
Southmead Hospital
Westbury-on-Trym
Bristol
BS10 5NB**

 **0117 414 6785**

 **Central Booking Line
0345 8725435**

 **www.nbt.nhs.uk**

If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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**take part...
be involved...**
in research



While in our care, you may be invited to take part in a research study.

To find out more visit:

www.nbt.nhs.uk/research



southmeadhospitalcharity.org.uk

Southmead Hospital Charity raises funds for departments and wards throughout the Trust, meaning you can support an area close to your heart