

## **After a First Trimester Surgical D&C**

### *What to expect and self-care*

*This handout explains what to expect after having a surgical D&C (dilation and curettage procedure) in the first trimester of pregnancy. It includes self-care, activity restrictions, and when to call the clinic.*

### **Cramping**

You will likely have cramping right after your D&C. This cramping may last for a few days. Here are some things that can help with this cramping:

- Getting back rubs from your support person
- Putting a hot water bottle or heating pad on your abdomen
- Standing in a warm shower

If your cramps are so strong that you feel you need to take pain medicine, you may take:

- Up to 1,000 mg of acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 6 hours
- Up to 800 mg of ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) every 8 hours

You may also take both acetaminophen and ibuprofen, if needed.



*Rest and take good care of yourself after your D&C.*

### **Bleeding**

- It is normal to have some vaginal bleeding for up to 4 weeks after a D&C. You may have spotting or a moderate flow. Or, you may not bleed at all.
- Expect your next menstrual period to start 4 to 8 weeks after your D&C.

### **When to Call the Clinic**

Ongoing light bleeding or spotting is OK. But, call the clinic if you have:

- Heavy vaginal bleeding that soaks through more than 2 maxi-pads an hour, for 2 hours or more in a row

- Vaginal bleeding that is still heavy 10 days after your procedure
- Ongoing clots (clumps of blood) that are larger than a lemon
- A fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher
- Painful cramps not relieved by acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Vaginal discharge that smells bad or causes pain or itching
- Shaking with chills
- Deep feelings of sadness or depression
- Any questions or concerns that cannot wait until your follow-up visit

## Self-care

- Take good care of yourself. Rest when you are tired, eat healthy foods, and drink plenty of fluids.
- You may feel many emotions after your D&C. These might include sadness, depression, or guilt. These are normal reactions. They usually ease with time, but they can also come in waves. One minute you may be feeling OK, and the next minute you may feel very strong emotions. If you keep feeling this way, or if your feelings are very strong, call the clinic to talk about finding support for you.
- If your doctor prescribed antibiotics, be sure to take them exactly as prescribed until all of the pills are gone.

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or other UWMC healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

University Reproductive Care: 206.598.4225  
weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

After hours and on weekends or holidays, call 206.598.6190 and ask for the URC provider on call to be paged.

Website:  
<http://depts.washington.edu/obgyn/URC>

## Activities

- **For 1 week** after your D&C:
  - Do not have sex or put anything in your vagina. This includes tampons and douche.
  - Avoid heavy activities for 1 week. If any activity causes more cramping and bleeding, stop doing that activity for a few days.
- You may resume your usual light activities the day after your D&C, as you feel ready.

## Follow-up Visit

Make an appointment for a clinic visit for 2 weeks after your procedure. At this visit, your healthcare provider will make sure you are healing normally and will answer any questions you may have.