

Abortion Service - Pregnancy Counselling Clinic

Information leaflet

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. It 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 and non judgmental and 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.

Please ring 01282 803767 for an appointment, and give us your best contact number

Monday to Thursday from 8am to 6pm

Friday from 8am to 6pm

Excluding bank holiday

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 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 clinician 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 services 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 person you got pregnant with of the pregnancy, 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 7 days. This will be a telephone consultation.

Where will I be seen?

The service is based at Burnley General Teaching Hospital. The clinic address and directions will be provided when you have a planned appointment in the clinic.

What will happen before I have an abortion?

For many women, having an abortion will involve only one separate visit to the clinic:-

At the first appointment, a telephone call, an assessment will be carried out, the doctor or nurse will ask you questions about your medical history, periods, sexual history and contraception use. This will be done talking with you on your own.

You will have an opportunity to talk things through if you want to.

A plan for your treatment will be made and a telephone consent taken for the procedure. You will know if a scan will be necessary to check how pregnant you are.

You will be given an appointment to attend the clinic if you decide to continue with the abortion.

When you attend the clinic appointment

You will also:

- Be recommended to have a self-taken swab test for infection.
- Have your weight, height and blood pressure checked
- May have a blood test to check your blood group and for anaemia
- Cervical screen (smear test) if this is due
- Have a scan if you request this or have been recommended this is necessary
- Be provided with written information about the method of abortion.
- 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
- Be checked for the risk of having a blood clot related to pregnancy

What does an abortion involve?

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

Medical abortion

This is available up to 16 weeks.

It does not involve surgery or an anaesthetic

You take 2 different medicines 2 days apart. You will be awake and aware of the process. It will probably be painful and you may bleed heavily. The bleeding is usually worse than a period.

Early medical abortion (EMA) up to 10 weeks of pregnancy involves taking drugs to cause an early miscarriage. You usually take the second medication at home.

Medical abortion from 10–16 weeks uses the same drugs as EMA to cause a late miscarriage. You need 2 visits for this procedure. You need to be in hospital for the second treatment. 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

This is only available under local anaesthetic (you are not asleep).

You will be given medicine before the procedure to make it safer. You may have pain and bleeding after this medicine. The bleeding after the procedure is usually worse than a period.

Manual vacuum aspiration (MVA) under local anaesthetic

This is available from 6 to 10 weeks. You will need one visit after the assessment. A scan will be carried out prior to the procedure.

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.

What if I'm more than 16 weeks?

If you are 16 weeks or more pregnant by ultrasound scan we will be unable to perform an abortion for you at Burnley General Teaching Hospital.

We will discuss your options with you and can provide you with information and contact numbers for other clinics who can help.

Is it safe?

Yes. Abortion is usually safer than giving birth. Abortion can have risks; problems are less likely to occur when it is performed in early in pregnancy. Every individual is different and we will discuss any questions or concerns you may have at your appointment.

What happens next?

At the end of assessment telephone call you will know which procedure you are having and when. The appointment for your clinic visit will be made with a telephone call. Most appointments are available within 7 days.

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; women are advised to continue with the abortion once they have taken this drug. There may be an increase chance of miscarriage later in the pregnancy if you decide to continue the pregnancy at this time.

What happens after my abortion?

Written information is provided with our contact numbers. Usually your chosen contraception is supplied or an appointment is given to coordinate this at a later date.

A follow up pregnancy test will be given to you or an appointment in clinic arranged if the abortion has not been confirmed.

How do I arrange an appointment?

To arrange a fast, confidential, free telephone appointment for you to talk through your options telephone:

01282 803767- for appointment only

Monday to Thursday from 8am to 6pm

Friday from 8am to 6pm

Excluding bank holiday

Answering machine service in operation outside these hours.

References

- 1) Abortion your questions answered © FPA printed in March 2018
- 2) Abortion Care NICE guideline September 2019