



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. How long does an abortion appointment last?

Appointment times can vary depending on the degree of individualized attention each client needs.

Please know that it is our goal to provide individualized attention and care for every woman's needs to make sure you are appropriately assisted in a timely manner. Please discuss with our phone counselor when you set up your appointment what time may be needed for your appointment.

### 2. Will the abortion procedure hurt?

If you are having a first trimester [surgical abortion](#), you can choose either a numbing medication where you are alert and your cervix is numbed or you may prefer to have the procedure under general anesthesia. If you are having a second trimester [surgical abortion](#), this procedure is only performed under general anesthesia. With general anesthesia, you will be asleep during the procedure and pain free.

With numbing medication, there isn't a simple answer to this question, because everyone experiences it differently. However, we can offer feedback from a majority of our clients on how they feel. First, the doctor will give an injection of a medication to numb the cervix, the opening of the uterus. During the procedure, most clients feel lower abdominal pressure and some light to moderate menstrual-type cramping.

If you choose a medication abortion which is a Mifeprex & Misoprostol abortion, most women feel strong menstrual-type cramping for about 4 to 12 hours after administration of the Misoprostol. We will give you a prescription to help relieve this pain.

### 3. Is the abortion process safe?

We believe in true informed consent and we want you to know the facts about abortion. Abortion is one of the safest surgical procedures for women; however, every medical procedure has certain risks and possible complications. Despite improvements in the safety of legal abortion over the years, some abortions carry more risk than others due to the length of the pregnancy, the method of abortion, the type of anesthesia, the overall health condition of the woman, and the skill and training of the provider. Abortion risks and complication rates are so low in part because the large majority of procedures are performed early in pregnancy.

In accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) abortion surveillance statistics (counts all deaths associated, not just attributed to abortion, which is more than reported on death certificates), the risk of death associated with abortion is low --



approximately 0.7 deaths per 100,000 abortions -- and the risk of major complications is less than 1%. For comparison purposes, the risk of death when a pregnancy is continued to birth is about 10 times as great as the risk of death from induced abortion. (Note: The calculation of mortality from childbirth omits deaths from miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy.)

When you first call for an appointment, you will receive some general information on the procedure and its risks as required by Georgia law. Then, prior to the abortion during the personal counseling session, you will have an opportunity discuss and review the informed consent form that details all of the risks of surgery and this particular procedure. You will be required to place your initials at every section to indicate your understanding as well as be given all the time you need to ask questions.

#### **4. Can I bring someone with me?**

You are welcome and encouraged to bring a support person with you, whoever that person may be. Please know that due to security concerns, support persons may not be allowed in some parts of the clinic. Please ask when you make an appointment if this is an important issue to you.

If you are a minor, under 18 years old, there are certain requirements that may or may not involve your parent accompanying you.

Also, if you choose general anesthesia or pain medication supplementing local anesthesia, you must have a responsible driver to drive you after your appointment.

#### **5. If I am under 18 years old, do my parents need to know about my abortion?**

As of December 2005, the parent of a minor must be notified before an abortion is provided. Please call our clinic for more details.

#### **6. Are there any other legal requirements for an abortion?**

In Georgia, the following restrictions on abortion were in effect as of December 2005:

- The parent of a minor must be notified before an abortion is provided.
- A woman must receive state-directed counseling that includes information designed to discourage her from having an abortion and then wait 24 hours before the procedure is provided.
- A woman must receive the option of viewing the ultrasound and certain other requirements.

#### **7. How long does it take for me to recover from an abortion?**



Every woman's body is different, but typically you can go back to your normal routine/work the next day. However you should avoid any strenuous exercise for at least one week. Please review our After Care Information for more information.

#### **8. What do I wear to my appointment?**

- You will probably be most comfortable dressed in a loose-fitting, 2-piece outfit on your appointment. We also recommend that you wear socks, bring a light sweater and underwear big enough to accommodate a sanitary napkin
- It's best to leave any valuables and personal belongings at home. Our clinic has no way to secure any valuables such as jewelry or computers.

#### **9. What if I have other questions?**

If you have any other questions, please feel free to call one of our phone educators at 404-728-7900 or U.S. Toll Free at 1-800-877-6013.

#### **10. How much does an abortion cost?**

The fee charged for your abortion includes the pre-operative medical review, personal counseling, as well as the surgical procedure or the medication abortion drugs. However, your specific cost will be determined according to following:

- The type of abortion procedure
- The length of your pregnancy
- Health indications (including costs for additional lab work that may be needed based on your pre-operative medical review)
- Needed medications if your blood Rh factor is negative
- For your privacy and convenience, post-abortion prescription medications may be purchased at our clinic

Please be aware that this fee is based on the information you give over the phone and that there could be information derived from the pre-operative medical review that could affect the actual fee charged. For example, if you did not advise us that the length of your pregnancy was greater than first trimester or if we determine through lab tests that there are undisclosed or unknown medical issues, the fee could be subject to change.

#### **11. Do you offer Medicaid, Student or Low-Income discounts?**

The Cliff Valley Clinic has a sliding scale for wellness service fees only that depend on your annual household income and your access to insurance, Medicaid, your student status, or military status. Thus, we offer discounts for women on Medicaid and for students and the military. In Georgia, Medicaid does not pay for abortion, so this discount is offered from our



clinic for women with a current Medicaid card. To qualify for both the student and the military discounts, you will need to furnish a valid student or military identification card, in addition to the other ID required.

## **12. What types of payment do you accept?**

We accept money orders; a Master Card, VISA, or American Express credit or debit card. We cannot accept personal checks or cash.

## **13. Does my insurance cover the cost of an abortion?**

Most insurance plans cover abortion; however, in order to determine whether your policy actually covers this medical expense, you will need to call your insurance company or plan administrator to find out your benefits for abortion services. Please be sure to ask your insurance provider if you have a deductible or a co-pay so that you can be prepared for that expense. Depending on your policy, it may be necessary to obtain a referral from a primary care physician before setting up an abortion appointment.

Please be aware that if you choose to have your insurance company cover this medical expense, your insurance company may send a statement to the billing address on your insurance policy. If you are not the primary subscriber on your insurance plan, the primary subscriber may find out about your abortion.

We are contracted with several insurance companies: Blue Choice and the State of Georgia health plan as well as other insurance plans will cover an abortion at our clinic. However, our insurance department must verify your coverage in advance of your appointment. So when you call for an appointment at our Cliff Valley Clinic, our insurance department will verify your insurance coverage in advance of your appointment. If you happen to determine that your insurance policy covers abortion care after you schedule your appointment but prior to your appointment, you can still call to get your insurance verified.

When you come in for your appointment, you will need to bring in your insurance card and a valid picture identification card to complete the verification process. Also, if your policy requires it, you may need a referral or payment for the deductible or co-pay. We accept payments by money order, Master Card, VISA, Discover or American Express. We also accept debit cards with a Master Card, VISA or American Express logo. The cardholder must be present to sign the receipt

## **14. What method of abortion is right for me?**

Each woman who plans to terminate a pregnancy needs to choose the kind of abortion that is right for her. Both surgical and non-surgical (medication) options are safe, effective, and highly acceptable to women.

**15. What are some of the reasons that women choose a surgical abortion?**

- The abortion procedure is complete in a few hours
- The woman's schedule does not permit multiple visits to the clinic as would be required with a medical abortion
- There is less bleeding than a medical abortion
- The woman may be more familiar with the surgical procedure
- The surgical procedure is less expensive than medical abortion due to the cost of the drug from the manufacturer
- The surgery can be completed while asleep under general anesthesia (some women do choose or need numbing medication)
- The woman wants to know that the pregnancy has ended after her appointment.

**16. What are some reasons that women choose a non-surgical abortion?**

- A non-surgical medical abortion may feel "more natural" to her
- The woman wants to have more control over the abortion
- The woman prefers not to have surgery
- The woman can "have the abortion" (the expelling of the uterine contents) in the privacy of her own home
- The woman may be more familiar with a medical abortion.

**What is the purpose of the private counselling session before an abortion?**

The Feminist Women's Health Center's Cliff Valley Clinic firmly supports a woman's right to choose the outcome of her pregnancy. Each woman is seen individually for a counseling session to establish that the decision to have an abortion is her own and that another person is not pressuring her to make a decision against her will.

Only those counselors or health advocates with optimum interpersonal and communications skills are part of this team, given the level of sensitivity and support offered at our clinic.

If a woman decides to continue her pregnancy, we will provide appropriate referrals for prenatal care or adoption.

**17. What counselling services are provided?**

- Each woman's care includes personal counseling before the abortion, and additional counseling is available for her partner and family if needed. If a woman is firm in her decision regarding abortion, then the counselor reviews the informed consent forms, answers questions about the procedure, explores birth control options, if needed, and reviews after care instructions.
- If a woman is undecided, we can also offer more involved "decision-making" counseling that includes worksheets and other resources to aid her. Sometimes, we will send her home with worksheets and materials to

continue the process. We will not perform an abortion on any woman who has not made the decision of her own free will or who is not yet ready to make a decision.

- If needed, we can offer post-abortion counseling for several sessions after the procedure. Some women who need to explore their post-abortion emotions and supportive resources may find help at the website Exhale: an after-abortion counseling talkline.

### **18. Do we provide culturally sensitive services?**

Yes. We recognize that a woman's cultural framework, which reflects her religious, spiritual, and moral beliefs, affects each her life decisions. We are committed to culturally sensitive advocacy and counseling that is woman-centered, stepping inside her framework and respecting her life view providing her with a safe place to explore her decision. Through active listening and respectful dialogue with women we strive to increase our knowledge of the cultural impact of pregnancy, birth, abortion, and sexuality upon women of diverse origins.

### **19. Client Education & Advocacy:**

Every employee is charged with the responsibility of advocacy. All Feminist Women's Health Center Cliff Valley Clinic employees are charged with the responsibility of advocacy. In addition, the counselor's role during an abortion appointment is specifically to advocate for the woman, as set forth in the following:

- Support the woman in any choice she makes about her pregnancy.
- Help her plan how to communicate her choice to appropriate people.
- Help the woman choose the medications or anesthesia that will be best for her.
- Correct any erroneous information the woman has about the procedure, her body, or birth control.
- Answer all of the woman's questions with patience and respect.
- Advocate and support the woman during the surgical portion of the visit.
- Inform each woman she needs to be aware of any last minute change of decision, and encourage her to speak up if she changes her mind or becomes confused.

### **20. Do you offer prenatal and abortion referrals?**

Yes, if a woman decides abortion is not for her, we provide prenatal care referrals and adoption information if requested.