

# Frequently Asked Questions



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## How long does an abortion appointment last?

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Appointment times can vary depending on the type of procedure and specifics of each patient's history and needs. Please know that it is our goal to provide individualized attention and care for every patient's unique needs to make sure you are appropriately assisted in a timely manner. When you set up your appointment, please discuss the amount of time that may be needed for your appointment with our phone counselor. We do our best to quickly move you through your appointment but in general there is a lot of waiting. It's a good idea to bring a book, magazine or quiet activity with you. Your procedure can be longer for a pregnancy that is 12 weeks or above. In these cases, your appointment may be **6-9 hours** long. Please inform your accompanying person/s accordingly.

## Will the abortion procedure hurt?

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There are lots of options and everyone is different. If you are having a first trimester surgical abortion you can choose to take a numbing medication where you are alert and your cervix is numbed or to have the procedure under anesthesia. If you are having a second trimester surgical abortion, this procedure is only performed under anesthesia.

With numbing medication, there isn't a simple answer to this question, because everyone experiences it differently. However, below is a description of how most of our patients 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, where a patient takes two pills - Mifeprex & Misoprostol, most feel strong menstrual-type cramping for about 4 to 24 hours after administration of Misoprostol. We will give you a prescription to help relieve the pain and cramping.

## Is the abortion process safe?

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Yes. Abortion is a common and very safe procedure. There are many false myths from people who do not believe you should have the option to choose abortion. While every medical procedure involves some risk, the truth is that complications are rare. In fact, abortion is safer than childbirth—and safer even than having your tooth pulled or getting a shot of penicillin.

Abortion is also safe in the long-term. An uncomplicated abortion will not affect your ability to have children in the future. There is no link between abortion and breast cancer or any other ongoing physical or mental condition.

When you first call for an appointment, you will receive a reading we are required by Georgia law to share. Then, prior to the abortion during the personal counseling session, you will have an opportunity to discuss and review all the facts and minimal risks of your particular procedure. You will be given all the time you need to ask questions.

## Can I bring someone with me?

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You are welcome and encouraged to bring someone with you for support. There are parts of the process where we talk with you one-on-one, and much of the time only medical staff and counselors are with you for safety and confidentiality reasons. Our counselors and medical staff are trained to be compassionate and support you. Your loved ones will be kept informed of your progress throughout your visit.

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

Also, if you choose anesthesia or pain medication supplementing local anesthesia, you must have a driver over the age of 18 to accompany you and drive you after your appointment. In this case, you also can take an Uber or Lyft **only if** you have a friend or family member (over 18 years of age) to ride along with you.

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

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In most cases your parents do have to know, but there are exceptions. If you're under the age of 18 and want to have an abortion, call us and we can explain to you all of your options.

- Your parent or legal guardian can verify notification (over the phone and again in person with proper identification matching the name on the minor's birth certificate).
- If you don't want to tell your parents, you can possibly obtain a judicial approval, allowing you to get your abortion without telling your parents.

Call us and our staff can explain more about the judicial approval process and necessary identification needed from your parent or legal guardian. Also, unless you decided to apply for and receive the judicial bypass in order to set up your appointment, your parent/guardian will need to speak to our phone counselor.

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

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Every patient'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 instructions** for more information.

## What do I wear to my appointment?

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- 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 pad.
- 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.

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

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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 (costs for additional lab work based on your medical review or other needs)
- Needed medications if your blood Rh factor is negative.
- Contraception (Birth control), if desired.

We can estimate the fee of your procedure over the phone. But, if your pregnancy is greater past the first trimester or if we determine through lab tests that there are other medical issues, the fee could increase. We base our pricing on the sonogram performed at our clinic on the date of the procedure. If you have limited funds, we can help. Speak with a member of our funding staff to discuss discounts and funding options from our partners. We do our best to help you get the care you need regardless of your ability to pay.

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

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In Georgia, Medicaid does not pay for abortion, but we offer a discount directly from our clinic for patients with a current Medicaid card. To qualify for both the student and the military discounts, please bring a valid student or military ID along with to the other ID required. Everyone's situation is unique and we will do our best to help you get the care you need regardless of your ability to pay.

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

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

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

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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.

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

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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.

We are contracted with several insurance companies. Ideally, our team will verify your coverage before your appointment. If you learn that your insurance policy covers abortion care after you schedule, but prior to your appointment, you can still call to verify insurance.

Bring 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 or Master Card, VISA or American Express debit and credit cards. The cardholder must be present to sign the receipt. In some cases, payment can be taken over the phone or online before the appointment.

If you are concerned about keeping your procedure private, please note that if you are a part of your spouse's or a family member's insurance, they may learn of your procedure from the insurance. Your insurance may send a billing statement identifying that you had the procedure.

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

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Each person who plans to end their pregnancy needs to choose the kind of abortion that is right for them. Both surgical and non-surgical (medication) options are safe, effective, and allow patients to quickly return back to their daily routine.

## **What are some of the reasons to choose a surgical abortion?**

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- The abortion procedure is complete in a few hours.
- The patient's schedule does not permit multiple visits to the clinic as would be required with a medication abortion.
- There is less bleeding than a medication abortion.
- The patient may be more familiar with the surgical procedure.
- The surgery can be completed while under anesthesia (some patients choose or need numbing medication).
- The patient wants the procedure to be complete and the pregnancy to be ended before the end of the appointment.

## **What are some reasons that patients choose a medication abortion?**

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- A medication (non-surgical) abortion may feel “more natural” and less invasive
- The patient wants to have more control over the abortion
- The patient prefers not to have surgery
- The patient can “have the abortion” (the expelling of the uterine contents) at home
- The patient may be more familiar with a medication abortion.

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

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We firmly support your right to choose the outcome of your pregnancy. Each patient is seen individually for a counseling session to establish that the decision to have an abortion is your own and that another person is not pressuring you or forcing you to have an abortion.

Our counselors and health advocates are here to answer your questions, provide you with support, and learn of any special circumstances to be sensitive to and aware as we aim to provide you the best individualized care.

## **What counseling services are provided?**

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- Each patient’s care includes personal counseling before the abortion, and additional counseling is available for her partner and family if needed. If the patient is firm in the 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 patient is undecided, we can also offer more involved “decision-making” counseling that includes worksheets and other resources. Sometimes, we will send the patient home with worksheets and materials to continue the process. We will not perform an abortion on any patient who has not made the decision freely 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 need to explore their post-abortion emotions and supportive resources may find help at the website [Exhale: an after-abortion counseling talk line](#).

## Do you provide culturally sensitive services?

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Yes. We recognize that a person's cultural framework, which reflects their religious, spiritual, and moral beliefs, affects their life decisions. We are committed to culturally sensitive advocacy and counseling that is patient-centered, providing the patient with a safe place to explore your decision. Through active listening and respectful dialogue we strive to increase our knowledge of the cultural impact of pregnancy, birth, abortion, and sexuality upon patients of a wide range of backgrounds.

## Do you offer prenatal and adoption referrals?

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Yes, if you decide abortion is not for you, we can provide prenatal care referrals and adoption information if requested. We are here to support all your options.

To schedule an appointment, call Feminist Women's Health Center at **404-728-7900** or **1-800-877-6013**. Our trained health educators would love to assist you and answer any questions you may have.