Policy

Clinical Guideline

South Australian Perinatal Practice Guidelines –First trimester medical and surgical termination of pregnancy

Policy developed by: SA Maternal & Neonatal Clinical Network
Approved SA Health Safety & Quality Strategic Governance Committee on: 10 June 2014
Next review due: 31 July 2016

Summary
Clinical practice guideline for the management of the woman undergoing a first trimester termination of pregnancy or a surgical termination of pregnancy.

Keywords
first trimester, termination of pregnancy, medical, surgical, top, products of conception, mifepristone, misoprostol, quantitative β-hcg , ultrasound, suction, Perinatal Practice Guidelines, First trimester medical and surgical termination of pregnancy, clinical guideline

Policy history
Is this a new policy? N
Does this policy amend or update an existing policy? Y
Does this policy replace an existing policy? Y
If so, which policies?
First trimester medical and surgical termination of pregnancy

Applies to
All SA Health Portfolio
All Department for Health and Ageing Divisions
All Health Networks
CALHN, SALHN, NALHN, CHSALHN, WCHN, SAAS
Other

Staff impact
All Clinical, Medical, Nursing, Allied Health, Emergency, Dental, Mental Health, Pathology

PDS reference CG149

Version control and change history

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South Australian Perinatal Practice Guidelines

Ist trimester medical and surgical termination of pregnancy

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Note

This guideline provides advice of a general nature. This statewide guideline has been prepared to promote and facilitate standardisation and consistency of practice, using a multidisciplinary approach. The guideline is based on a review of published evidence and expert opinion.

Information in this statewide guideline is current at the time of publication.

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Health practitioners in the South Australian public health sector are expected to review specific details of each patient and professionally assess the applicability of the relevant guideline to that clinical situation.

If for good clinical reasons, a decision is made to depart from the guideline, the responsible clinician must document in the patient’s medical record, the decision made, by whom, and detailed reasons for the departure from the guideline.

This statewide guideline does not address all the elements of clinical practice and assumes that the individual clinicians are responsible for discussing care with consumers in an environment that is culturally appropriate and which enables respectful confidential discussion. This includes:

• The use of interpreter services where necessary,
• Advising consumers of their choice and ensuring informed consent is obtained,
• Providing care within scope of practice, meeting all legislative requirements and maintaining standards of professional conduct, and
• Documenting all care in accordance with mandatory and local requirements

Definition

> Termination of pregnancy refers to a procedure, whether medical or surgical, that results in expulsion of the products of conception

> In this guideline, first trimester termination of pregnancy refers to pregnancies ended before 12+6 weeks of gestation

> Second trimester termination refers to pregnancies ended after 13+0 weeks of gestation

Literature review

> It is estimated that approximately half of all pregnancies in Australia are unplanned

> A large Australian survey showed the following outcomes for women faced with an unplanned pregnancy:

  > Motherhood 56 %
  > Terminate pregnancy 29 %
  > Offer the baby for adoption: 2 %
  > Miscarriage 13 %

> In South Australia, approximately 20 % of recorded pregnancies end in termination of pregnancy

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Last Revised: 11/07/2014

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Medical termination of pregnancy

Background

- Mifepristone is a progesterone antagonist which binds to progesterone and glucocorticoid receptors. By preventing the effects of progesterone in the uterus it interferes with implantation and placental development resulting in fetal demise. It also increases uterine sensitivity to prostaglandins and softens and dilates the cervix making its use in conjunction with misoprostol very effective (> 96 %) in bringing about termination in early pregnancy.

- Misoprostol is a prostaglandin E-1 analogue which induces uterine contractions, cervical dilatation and ripening. It has been widely used overseas for pregnancy termination. When used alone without mifepristone in the first trimester it is reported to be > 83 % effective in expelling the products of conception from the uterus.

- Misoprostol in the first trimester of pregnancy has been shown to double the risk of congenital malformations. For this reason women should be informed of the importance of follow-up and in the rare event of ongoing pregnancy are recommended to undertake further abortion procedure when either medical or surgical abortion has failed.

- Mifepristone is TGA approved for use with misoprostol to terminate pregnancy up to 49 days (7 weeks) gestation. Its use up to 63 days (9 weeks) gestation remains off-label but is widely established as a safe alternative to surgical termination of pregnancy.

- Mifepristone and misoprostol are both listed on the PBS for the medical termination of a developing intrauterine pregnancy up to 49 days of gestation.

Indications

- Women seeking termination of pregnancy who are less than 63 days (9 weeks) from the first day of their last menstrual period as confirmed by ultrasound assessment of gestation.

Contraindications to mifepristone / misoprostol

- Bleeding conditions or concomitant administration of anticoagulants
- Inherited porphyria
- Adrenal failure
- Chronic corticosteroid use (as mifepristone suppresses adrenal function for 3-4 days due to its competitive antagonism at glucocorticoid receptors)
- Allergy to mifepristone and/or misoprostol
- Intrauterine device in situ
- Pelvic infection
- Known or suspected ectopic pregnancy

Assessment

- Health services that are unable to provide medical and/or surgical termination of pregnancy services must have defined clinical protocols to support staff in the prompt referral of the woman requiring these services.
Clinical history

- Date of last menstrual period
- Pregnancy test: type and timing
- Course of the current pregnancy
- Symptoms of pain and bleeding
- History of previous pregnancies
- Any medical conditions and allergies

Assess the woman on her own at some point in the consultation to establish that her request for a termination of pregnancy is not made under coercion especially by someone accompanying her.

Provide contraception for use immediately after completion of termination of pregnancy.

Fertility returns very quickly after medical termination of pregnancy. On average ovulation occurs on day 20 after mifepristone, but can occur as soon as 8 days after mifepristone.

Implanon, Depo Provera, progestogen only pill, or combined oral contraception should be initiated on the day of misoprostol administration. IUCD insertion should be booked for around 2 weeks afterwards to ensure complete expulsion of the products of conception before IUCD insertion.

Investigations

- Ultrasound or vaginal examination to assess the site and gestation of the pregnancy
- If no pregnancy is identified in the uterus, ectopic pregnancy needs to be considered. Correlation with a quantitative $\beta$-HCG is recommended in this situation. An intrauterine sac should be visible at 5+ weeks gestation and/or with a $\beta$-HCG of $>1,500$ IU.
- Mifepristone administration should be delayed until an intrauterine sac is confirmed due to reduced efficacy of mifepristone and misoprostol before an intrauterine sac becomes visible on ultrasound. Venous blood – for quantitative $\beta$-HCG, Blood Group, Rh status, Haemoglobin.

Management

- Written consent is obtained from the woman after full explanation of possible risks.
- Mifepristone 200 mg orally is administered.
- The woman is discharged with an oral anti-emetic in case of nausea / vomiting. She is asked to return to the hospital / clinic for a further dose if she vomits within 2 hours of mifepristone ingestion. For women who are already very nauseous 4 to 8 mg ondansetron or 10 mg metoclopramide can be given to reduce the chance of vomiting.
- After 24 to 48 hours the woman returns to the hospital / clinic having pre-medicated herself with an anti-emetic (either 4 to 8 mg ondansetron tablet / wafer OR 10 mg metoclopramide tablet orally) and an NSAID (either 400 mg ibuprofen OR 50 mg diclofenac orally).
- A dose of 4 x 200 micrograms misoprostol is given buccally or sublingually.
- Misoprostol usually acts quickly and the women can expect to pass products of conception within the next few hours, but bleeding usually continues for several weeks.
- An oral analgesic such as paracetamol 500 mg / codeine phosphate 30 mg is given for analgesia.
- Anti D 250 IU is administered to women who are Rh negative.
- The woman is discharged home to continue using regular oral analgesia (i.e. 50mg diclofenac every 8 hours) or if pain is severe two paracetamol 500 mg / codeine phosphate 30 mg tablets every 4 to 6 hours (up to 8 tablets in 24 hour period).
- The woman needs to have adequate support for the process, including a support person to drive her home and / or return to the hospital (via car or ambulance) in the case of bleeding necessitating urgent treatment.
Written information must be provided to the woman. She should be advised not to use tampons and to abstain from intercourse for 7 days to reduce the risk of infection. In the case of very heavy bleeding (usually on the day of the misoprostol administration) she is advised to present to an emergency service. Urgent dilatation and curettage may be required.

It is recommended that the woman has access to a 24 hour phone line in case health triage and advice is needed (e.g. Marie Stopes AfterCare line, Telephone: 1300 515 883). The woman is advised that, if she is still bleeding as much or more than the normal first day of her period seven days after using misoprostol or has stop/start bleeding, she should contact the doctor/hospital for review. This is generally an indication that there are retained products of conception. Check by ultrasound, if there is doubt.

Women need to agree to undertake the follow-up process (see below) to ensure all products of conception have been expelled.

Follow-up

Follow up is recommended to ensure that the pregnancy is not on-going. Symptoms of retained products of conception and infection should also be reviewed and treated accordingly.

The following indicate that the pregnancy has been successfully terminated:

1. Pregnancy symptoms subside (i.e. nausea)
2. The next menstrual period is expected within 5 weeks. This may be absent where Implanon or Depo Provera is used.
3. Falling β-HCG levels. Quantitative β-HCG level between day 10 and 20 can be compared to the initial value. A pathology order form for quantitative β-HCG level can be given at the woman’s initial consultation with verbal request to attend a community collection centre 10-20 days later.
4. A negative urine β-HCG test. It may take some time after the termination procedure before levels fall below 15-25 IU (the usual level at which a urine test is positive). Urine pregnancy tests may remain positive for at least 4 weeks after termination of pregnancy.

The β-HCG values correlate poorly with retained products of conception. Clinical assessment of symptoms and signs is recommended to assess for retained products of conception +/- ultrasound.

Management of complications

Haemorrhage

Severe haemorrhage is a complication occurring in about 0.1%\(^5\). It needs ready access to dilatation and curettage facilities.

Less heavy but persistent bleeding is better managed with further home medication with oral misoprostol and avoidance of surgery where possible.

Ongoing pregnancy

Continuing symptoms of pregnancy or a rising β-HCG suggest a continuing pregnancy. This should be confirmed with ultrasound (to exclude molar pregnancy) before commencing any further procedures to terminate the pregnancy.

Surgical management with suction curette if > 9 weeks gestation. If < 9 weeks gestation repeat doses of mifepristone and misoprostol could be an alternative option.

Retained products of conception

Management depends on the amount of bleeding, symptoms / signs of infection and the woman’s preference:

Either medical management with further misoprostol (800 micrograms stat buccally followed by 400 micrograms buccally every 8 hours for 2 days) or surgical management with dilatation and curettage.
Infection

> Severe infections after medical termination are rare. In Australia there has been one reported case of death (less than 0.01 % prevalence) from Group A Streptococcal sepsis in a woman 9 days after medical termination. Despite fever and flu-like symptoms she had not sought medical help.

> Overseas, there have been reported cases of Clostridium sordellii and Clostridium perfringens infections leading to death with a rate in the United States of 0.58 per 100,000 medical terminations.

> Medical practitioners assessing a woman after medical termination should, therefore, be alert to the rare possibility of severe infection. In the case of sepsis inpatient management with appropriate IV antibiotics is recommended.

> Routine antibiotic prophylaxis is not indicated but could be considered for women deemed to be at high risk of infection.

> Less severe infection still remains uncommon with a rate of suspected or proven infection of 0.2 %. Infection is often related to retained products of conception and assessment and treatment for this is also recommended concurrently.
Surgical termination of pregnancy

Indications
> Women seeking termination of pregnancy at a gestational age of 12 weeks or less. The alternative is medical termination with mifepristone / misoprostol if < 9 weeks
> Vacuum aspiration involves evacuation of the uterus under local or general anaesthesia and has well proven success and safety record
> The woman should be informed that she will not be able to drive or drink alcohol for 24 hours after the procedure. Arrangements will need to be made in advance for her transport home after discharge

Assessment
> Clinical history:
  > Date of last menstrual period
  > Pregnancy test: type and timing
  > Course of the current pregnancy
  > Any symptoms of pain and bleeding
  > History of previous pregnancies and gynaecological surgery in particular LSCS, LLETZ, cone biopsy or known variation in uterine anatomy such as bicornuate uterus
  > Medical conditions and allergies
> Assess the woman on her own at some point in the consultation to establish that her request for a termination of pregnancy is not made under coercion especially by someone accompanying her

Investigations
> Ultrasound to assess the site and gestation of the pregnancy
> If no pregnancy is seen in the uterus, ectopic pregnancy needs to be considered. Correlation with a quantitative $\beta$-HCG is recommended in this situation. An intrauterine sac should be visible at 5+ weeks gestation and/or with a $\beta$-HCG of >1,500 IU
> An intrauterine pregnancy should be confirmed before suction aspiration. If a fetal pole is not yet identified before surgery, additional investigations will be required to exclude ectopic pregnancy and to confirm a completed abortion. If there is any doubt at the time of surgery, products of conception may need to be sent for histopathology or follow up with $\beta$-HCG instituted
> Blood Group, Rh status

Management
> Written consent is obtained from the woman after full explanation and understanding of the possible risks of the procedure
> Provision of contraception for use after termination of pregnancy is completed. Implanon or IUCD can be inserted at the time of the surgical termination of pregnancy
> The risk of expulsion of an IUCD increases with increasing gestational age at the time of termination (due to greater cervical dilatation) but there are no other increased risks. Therefore, it is not necessary to avoid insertion given that it is an opportune time to insert efficacious long-acting contraception
> Screening for Chlamydia should be undertaken before insertion of an IUCD

Preoperative preparation
> Fast from food for six hours (clear fluids 2 hours) before the procedure
> Administer pre-operative misoprostol for cervical preparation
> Cervical preparation reduces the need for mechanical cervical dilatation as well as the risk of an incomplete evacuation

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Dose of misoprostol is dependent on gestational age

Ideally, women can take misoprostol at home orally 3 hours before the procedure or, if they come for consultation and surgery on the same day, misoprostol can be given sublingually allowing at least 30 minutes for its effect

Women should have made a clear decision before taking misoprostol. In the event of abortion not proceeding or a continuing pregnancy it is important to note misoprostol in the first trimester of pregnancy has been shown to double the risk of congenital malformations4. For this reason women should be informed of the importance of follow-up and in the rare event of on-going pregnancy are recommended to undertake further procedure for termination when either medical or surgical termination of pregnancy has failed

Anti-emetics are given to women who need more than two doses of misoprostol because of the increased incidence of vomiting

Table 1: 1st trimester surgical abortion cervical priming doses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GESTATION</th>
<th>RECOMMENDED PRE-MEDICATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>5-9 weeks</td>
<td>Misoprostol 200 micrograms orally 3 hours before surgery</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 weeks</td>
<td>Misoprostol 200 micrograms orally 3 hours before surgery AND Misoprostol 200 micrograms orally at least 30 minutes before surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 weeks</td>
<td>Misoprostol 200 micrograms orally 3 hours before surgery AND Misoprostol 400 micrograms orally after 30 minutes (at least 30 minutes before surgery)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>Misoprostol 200 micrograms orally 3 hours before surgery THEN Misoprostol 400 micrograms orally after 30 minutes THEN misoprostol 400 micrograms after another 30 minutes (at least 30 minutes before surgery)</td>
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</table>

Procedure

Abdominal or transvaginal ultrasound (or bimanual examination if ultrasound is not available) is used to confirm gestation. Uterine position is also assessed

The woman is prepared in the lithotomy position

Betadine or chlorhexadine solution to the pubic area, vulva, perineum and vagina

Drape with sterile sheet

Insert Sims speculum to expose cervix

Two volsellum forceps are applied to the anterior lip of the cervix to control the position of the cervix

Inject cervical local anaesthetic:

Inject just lateral to the cervical os at each side (3 o’clock and 9 o’clock positions) with half the local anaesthetic at each site. An appropriate dose (a total of 7 mL at < 8 weeks gestation and 14 mL at ≥ 8 weeks gestation) of lignocaine 2 % with adrenaline 1:200,000 should be given to achieve cervical anaesthesia

The maximum safe dose of 7 mg / kg will not be exceeded

Adrenaline should be omitted when gestation is less than 6 weeks due to the risk of prolonged uterine artery vasospasm

Dilate cervix with Hegar or Hawkin / Ambler dilators to a size appropriate for gestation and parity. See table 2 below:
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gestation in weeks</th>
<th>Dilatation in millimetres</th>
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<tr>
<td>6 and less</td>
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<tr>
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<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
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> Choose appropriate suction curette and attach to the tubing. Either flexible or rigid suction catheters are used. Insert into the uterus up to the fundus with the suction hole open. Then, apply suction and move the curette with a circular motion while slowly withdrawing it until the uterus is empty. Curved rigid suction curettes are useful for accessing cornual angles and the fundus of acutely flexed uterine bodies.

> Check with transvaginal ultrasound that no pregnancy sac or retained products of conception remain.
> Administer misoprostol 200 micrograms into the posterior fornix of the vagina.
> Indomethacin 100 mg can be inserted per rectum for analgesia.
> Check swab count is correct.
> Anti D 250 IU is administered to women who are Rh negative.
> There is no benefit from prophylactic administration of oxytocin or ergometrine in the first trimester.

**Post-operative management**

> Record baseline temperature, pulse, blood pressure and vaginal blood loss on return from theatre.
> Repeat temperature, pulse, blood pressure and vaginal loss after one hour or sooner if indicated.
> Offer a light meal and fluids when fully awake.

**Discharge criteria**

> Vital signs stable for at least one hour.
> Ensure the woman is orientated to time, place and relevant people.
> Adequate pain control with oral analgesics.
> Minimal nausea, vomiting or dizziness.
> Minimal bleeding.
> Has passed urine.
> Has a responsible adult to take her home.

> Instructions should be given to the woman to return to an emergency service should she have large vaginal blood loss or develop symptoms of infection such as fever, sweating, rigors, myalgia, vaginal discharge or escalating abdominal pain.
South Australian Perinatal Practice Guidelines

1st trimester medical and surgical termination of pregnancy

References


Useful guidelines:

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (UK).
The Care of Women Requesting Induced Abortion. Evidence-based Clinical Guideline Number 7, 2011.

http://ippf.org/resources/publications/abortion-guidelines-and-protocol

Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>COCP</td>
<td>Combined oral contraceptive pill</td>
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<tr>
<td>D &amp; C</td>
<td>Dilatation and curettage</td>
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<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>Gram(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hb</td>
<td>Haemoglobin</td>
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<tr>
<td>IU</td>
<td>International units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Intravenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kg</td>
<td>Kilogram(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LLETZ</td>
<td>Large loop excision of the transformation zone</td>
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<tr>
<td>LMP</td>
<td>Last menstrual period</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSCS</td>
<td>Lower segment caesarean section</td>
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<tr>
<td>mcg</td>
<td>Microgram(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>mg</td>
<td>Milligram(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mL</td>
<td>Millilitre(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSAIDs</td>
<td>Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quant β-HCG</td>
<td>Quantitative Beta-HCG</td>
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<td>Rh</td>
<td>Rhesus</td>
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<tr>
<td>S/L</td>
<td>Sublingual</td>
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<td>STOP</td>
<td>Surgical Termination of Pregnancy</td>
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<td>TGA</td>
<td>Therapeutic Goods Administration</td>
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<td>Termination of Pregnancy</td>
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