



SURGICAL PREGNANCY TERMINATION IN TASMANIA

Our clinic is delighted to be able to assist women in Tasmania who require a termination of pregnancy in the first trimester. Our upper limit on the day of your surgery is 13 weeks and 6 days. If you are uncertain about how many weeks pregnant you are then the most reliable test is with a **professional ultrasound**. Sometimes, blood pregnancy levels alone can lead to confusion as they go up early in pregnancy and then drop down, so that a 'low level' may not always mean an early pregnancy. Family Planning Tasmania, local government referrer and your local doctor can help you to access an ultrasound that is Bulk Billed, before you make your appointment, to avoid disappointment and confusion. This is very important for women who plan to travel long distances.

If your doctor has a "conscientious objection to abortion" they must then offer you information on where you can go for unbiased information and counselling. There are recent laws that provide "a safe access zone" in other words – no protestors, around clinics to reduce the harassment and intimidation of patients and staff.

WHAT IS THE METHOD INVOLVED IN SURGICAL PREGNANCY TERMINATION?

After you have decided that you are confident in making your decision to undergo a surgical abortion and have read and understood the risks, then most patients will be given a medication, under the tongue which will help contract your uterus. This causes the cervix to naturally soften and become more elastic. This will make your cervix open more easily, making the surgery easier and lowers the chance of remaining tissue.

After you have been given the anaesthetic and are asleep, the doctor will repeat an internal vaginal ultrasound to double check that the findings are the same as those found with the ultra sound that you have had performed prior to the appointment. The anaesthetic will be a short deep sleep (given by intravenous medications) so that you will not be aware nor feel anything during your surgery.

Vaginal swabs are taken to check for any potentially harmful bacteria and are sent to a pathology laboratory. Cytology based screening (Cervical Smear Test) can be done if you require a this and are over 25 years old, on request and if needed. You will be given antibiotics on the day of your surgery to help minimise the risk of infection and will be notified if any of the swab results require further treatment.



In order to stretch open the cervix, sterile stainless-steel dilators or rods are gently inserted through the opening of your cervix in increasing size. So, for example if your pregnancy is 8 weeks this requires approximately 8 mm (less than one centimetre) stretching of your cervix. This allows for plastic tubing to gently slide into the cavity of the uterus. With suction, the pregnancy travels from the uterus into a container. This allows the operating doctor to check, after the operation, that the pregnancy has been identified and then this is sent to the laboratory. Generally, under 9-10 weeks only a pregnancy sac is visible to the naked eye.

To ensure that the uterus is empty the uterus is gently felt with a curette to make sure that the walls feel free of pregnancy tissue.

Lastly, another vaginal ultrasound is performed AFTER THE OPERATION, when you are still asleep in theatre, which is compared with the first ultrasound, to make sure that your uterus is empty and well contracted down. If the uterus is not empty, then further suction can be performed at this time until the uterus appears empty and there is no bleeding.

In total this process generally takes about 12 – 15 minutes.

During the surgery you will be given anti-inflammatory suppositories to help minimise post-operative discomfort. Please let us know if you have any allergies.

If you desire an IUD to be put into your uterus at the time of your surgery, please let us know, as this is possible in patients' who have a normal shaped uterus and are less than 10 weeks' pregnant. Similarly, an Implanon can be placed in your arm when you are asleep so if this is your desired contraceptive choice, it might be worth talking with your referring doctor so that this can be organised for the day.

Pregnancies of the first trimester can be treated at our clinic. If you are 14 plus weeks your surgery will need to be performed at the RHH or interstate.

If you have read and understood the information above, please bring this with you. Please circle or highlight anything that you do not understand.

I _____ D.O.B. ____/____/____

have read and understood the information provided above. Dated
____/____/____.

Witness _____ Dated ____/____/____.