

## Choice Medical Group After Care Instructions

### **IF YOU HAD LAMINARIA INSERTED, YOU WILL WANT TO KNOW:**

It is very common to experience intense cramping for the entire evening after having laminaria inserted. Some women have no cramping, but for most women it is a very uncomfortable night. Your cervix is responding the way early labor feels. Take the pain medication to alleviate some of the discomfort.

It is normal to have a little spotting or even bleed like a period. Use pads, not tampons. If the bleeding streams down your legs when you stand, call **CHOICE**. Sometimes the "bag of waters" breaks. This would wet your clothing. If this happens, stay in bed and take your temperature every four hours.

Antibiotics are given to prevent infection. Since an elevated temperature can signal an infection process, we would like you to take your temperature tonight and in the morning when you wake up. If it is over 100.4 call **CHOICE**. You will need to take your temperature after surgery also, so buy or borrow a thermometer if you don't already have one.

Take antibiotics with food. If you take them on an empty stomach, it is likely you will vomit. As soon as you get home, have something light to eat and take one. Before you go to bed, eat something and take another one. If you vomit this medication, **DO NOT TAKE ANYMORE TONIGHT**. Tell the staff about it at the clinic tomorrow.

Acetaminophen with codeine, a pain reliever, is also best taken with food. Take one tablet to start. If it doesn't help with your discomfort, take another tablet. You may take one or two tablets every four to six hours as needed for pain. If you need a pain pill after midnight: take it with just a sip of water, no food.

If you vomit before midnight, take nothing by mouth for at least half an hour after vomiting, then try drinking some tea and eating plain (unbuttered) toast, if it is before midnight. If that stays down, try taking your medication. If your vomiting is severe and frequent, call **CHOICE** and have **THE NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF A PHARMACY THAT IS CURRENTLY OPEN** when you call. It is likely we will order Compazine suppositories, to control the nausea and vomiting. We would instruct you to insert one suppository in your rectum and wait: 30 minutes. If the nausea eased, you could then try drinking some tea and eating plain (unbuttered) toast. If that stays down, in a half hour try taking pain medication if needed. If you vomit again, use another suppository.

### **WHAT SHOULD I DO TONIGHT?**

We suggest you relax tonight. Make your surroundings peaceful and ask those around you to be very kind to you. Eat lightly. It is better to eat small frequent meals than a single big meal. Avoid eating heavy foods, as they increase the chances for nausea and vomiting. Warm showers help with relaxation (**NO TUB BATHS**). Ask someone to give you a back rub. Turn off the TV and play some soothing music. If you need pain medication, we suggest you go to bed and relax. A hot water bottle or heating pad placed against your abdomen is helpful in relieving cramping. Above all, stay calm. Tension increases pain. Do not eat or drink after midnight. **(EATING OR DRINKING PRIOR TO GENERAL ANESTHESIA CAN CAUSE SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS, INCLUDING DEATH.)**

### **WHAT IF I HAVE A MISCARRIAGE?**

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Laminaria insertion may in rare instances bring about a miscarriage. If this happens, call **CHOICE** immediately. If your cramps are VERY intense and regular, coming every five minutes for more than a half hour, we would like you to call **CHOICE**.

### **WHAT IF THE LAMINARIA FALL OUT?**

The laminaria are removed at the time of your abortion. Occasionally they fall out while you are home. If this happens, don't worry about it. The laminaria have done their job. A gauze pad was put in your vagina during the laminaria insertion. If this falls out, don't worry about it either, just tell the staff about it in the morning. **DO NOT PUT ANYTHING** in your vagina tonight.

### **WHAT ELSE?**

Call **CHOICE** if you have a temperature over 100.4, severe vomiting, heavy bleeding, or if you think you are miscarrying. Do not put anything in your vagina. Stay calm and relaxed. Do not eat or drink after midnight. If you call **CHOICE** for any reason, take your temperature first and **HAVE YOUR PHARMACY TELEPHONE NUMBER** handy. Please stay off the phone so we can call you right back.

### **After your laminaria insertion, we consider the following to be an emergency:**

- Miscarriage;
- Temperature of 100.4 or more;
- Pain that is severe, and not relieved at all by our suggestions;
- Vomiting that is severe and won't stop;
- Blood streaming down your legs

### **AFTER YOUR ABORTION:**

We want you to know one of the most important things you can do the first week after your abortion is to pay attention to your body. If you have chills or a fever, are bleeding heavily or have severe cramps, read this booklet over carefully. If you have questions, please call **CHOICE** before seeking medical attention anywhere else. Some health care providers are not experienced with post abortion care and may mistake what is normal for a problem. Some providers also have negative feelings about abortion. This may influence their judgment, and you could end up with unnecessary medical expenses.

### **Please call CHOICE if you have:**

- Temperature over 100.4.
- Prolonged, excessive bleeding.
- Severe cramping that does not respond to our suggestions for pain relief.

### **Before you call CHOICE, please:**

- Read this booklet over carefully.
- Check your temperature.
- Have your pharmacy phone number ready.

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If you think you may be developing a problem, it is always best to call **CHOICE** during normal business hours. Staff members are immediately available to respond to your needs. They have access to your medical records which include important information when determining what is normal or not for you after the abortion.

After normal business hours, the on-call person is a qualified nurse who is not physically located at the clinic, and answers calls from her home or carries a pager. It may take time for the answering service to reach the on-call person and then for her to return your call. Be aware that your call is important to us, and we will respond as promptly as possible. Please stay near your phone and keep the line free so we can reach you. If you feel this is an emergency, we want to respond as quickly and efficiently as possible.

**BLEEDING:** Bleeding after an abortion is normal. Some women bleed for up to two weeks, some longer. Some women spot, others start and stop and start again. Some women don't bleed at all. Some women pass clots. Some women bleed more after strenuous activity. Bleeding can be different with each woman and with each abortion. Dime size to plum size blood clots can be normal. Drinking alcohol can increase bleeding. Occasional gushes of blood can be normal. If this happens, lay down and elevate your feet. Take 600 mg Ibuprofen. If you have repeated or persistent heavy bleeding, please call **CHOICE**.

**PAIN:** It is normal to have cramps after an abortion. For some women these cramps can be more painful than menstrual cramps. We suggest taking Ibuprofen 600 to 800 mg. every 6 hours for cramps. Some women get; the best relief by taking Ibuprofen every 6 hours for 72 hours. If you cannot take Ibuprofen, try taking two Extra strength Tylenol every six hours.

Cramping may increase just before the passing of blood clots. This, can be normal. Clots can vary from dime to plum size. A hot water bottle or heating pad placed against your abdomen can be helpful in relieving cramping. Try taking a hot shower and drinking hot herbal tea. Some women get relief from massaging their lower abdomen. Remember NO TUB BATHS until after your follow-up visit.

**INFECTION:** We prescribed antibiotics to prevent infection. After your surgery, we want you to take one Doxycycline every morning and every night; until they are gone. Take your antibiotics with food. Nausea is common when this type of medication is taken on an empty stomach, so eat so you can take your medicine. This is very important: even if you don't feel hungry. If you were given a different antibiotic, you will have different instructions. Read the package label.

It is very important to take your temperature every morning and night; for four days following your abortion. If you do not have a thermometer, buy or borrow one. Take your temperature before you call us with a problem. THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. If at anytime you check your temperature and it is over 100.4, we want you to call **CHOICE**.

You can help prevent infection by not putting anything into your vagina. This includes tampons, intercourse and douching. No tub baths, hot tubbing, or swimming either.

**MENSTRUAL PERIODS:** The bleeding you have right after an abortion is not your menstrual period. Please know that you can ovulate at any time and can get pregnant again immediately. Yes, it is true: you can get pregnant when you are still bleeding. Most women have a period in 4 to 6 weeks, some sooner and some later. If you don't have a period by 6 weeks after your abortion, call **CHOICE**.

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**ACTIVITIES:** Most women are able to return to work the day after their abortion. Do not drive or operate machinery for 24 hours after general anesthesia. Cramping, bleeding and even the passing of blood clots can be normal after an abortion. If you normally exercise, you can resume your usual routine in a few days. If bleeding increases or cramping is intense, your body may be telling you to slow down. No swimming until after your follow-up visit.

**FEELINGS:** Feeling emotional after an abortion is also common. Some women feel elated and relieved while others feel sad. The best thing to do is talk about how you feel with a good friend. If your feelings seem overwhelming, you may need some professional help. Please call **CHOICE** to discuss this if it is a problem.

**BREAST SYMPTOMS:** Breast tenderness can be the last pregnancy symptom to disappear. Some women go from pregnancy tenderness to premenstrual tenderness without a break. If your breasts are swollen, hard, painful, or leaking fluid, we suggest a tight supportive bra day and night, and ibuprofen 600 mg every 4 hours. Ice packs to each arm pit can help. Do not massage or squeeze the nipples. This only encourages milk production. There is no drug to stop these symptoms. Time will resolve the problem.

**SEXUAL ACTIVITY:** After an abortion, some women say they will never have sex again, while others are eager to resume sexual relations. PLEASE REFRAIN FROM SEXUAL ACTIVITIES UNTIL AFTER YOU RETURN FOR YOUR FOLLOW-UP VISIT. It is possible to conceive after an abortion, and even if you have your next period. You can conceive even if you are still bleeding. Whenever you resume intercourse, please use birth control.

**AFTER ANESTHESIA:** The day of your surgery should be relaxed and devoted to resting and recovering. We suggest you go home, eat a light meal, and take a nap. Drink lots of fluids the first day. Sore throat, muscle aches or anxiety can follow anesthesia and usually disappear within 48 hours. Drinking hot tea with honey helps the sore throat. Ibuprofen or Tylenol can help with the body aches. A brisk walk in fresh air can help with anxiety. If these methods don't work, you can purchase 25 mg Benadryl at the drug store. Take one or two 25 mg capsules. Benadryl usually resolves post anesthesia symptoms totally. Benadryl may make you sleepy, so do not drive or operate machinery after taking it.

Sometimes a bruise may develop at the IV site. It may be hard and tender to touch. Try applying warm wet compresses four to six times a day. Take ibuprofen 600 mg every six hours for 72 hours. Call **CHOICE** if there is no improvement.

### **MEDICATIONS:**

Methergine is given to some patients to firm the uterus. If you were given Methergine tablets, take one every three hours until they are gone. If there are leftover pills in the morning, take one every three hours until all tablets are gone. If you fall asleep or forget, start taking them as soon as you remember. Take one every three hours, until gone.

Doxycycline is to be taken twice a day to prevent infection. Take one tablet every morning and one tablet every night until gone. Take this medication with food. If you were given another antibiotic, then follow the directions written on the package. If you are prone to yeast infections, we suggest you take acidophilus tablets, to prevent yeast overgrowth. Acidophilus tablets can be purchased in most health food stores. Stay out of the sun – doxycycline can make you prone to sunburn easily.

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Ibuprofen 600 to 800 mg or two Tylenol Extra Strength tablets can be taken every 4 – 6 hours to relieve cramping. Severe pain might indicate a problem, and may need to be evaluated by a pelvic exam at the clinic.

All of these medications can be taken at the same time. All can be taken with food. Doxycycline and Ibuprofen should always be taken with food.

**PREGNANCY SYMPTOMS** usually disappear in a day or two, except for breast tenderness. If nausea continues beyond a few days, please call **CHOICE**.

**FOLLOW-UP VISIT:** We want to make sure everything is normal after your abortion. Between two and three weeks after your abortion, you should return to the clinic for a pregnancy test. After this visit, you can resume sexual activity, tub baths, swimming, hot tubbing, and begin using tampons if you wish.

The follow-up visit is done on a drop-in basis. Please call the clinic to check the times this service is available. No appointment is necessary and there is no charge. If you appear to be experiencing a problem, we may schedule you for a pelvic exam.

**Within eight weeks of your abortion, we consider the following to be an emergency:**

- Temperature over 100.4
- Blood streaming down your legs
- Repeated gushes of blood
- Pelvic pain that makes it difficult to function, and is not relieved by Ibuprofen

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**REMEMBER, IF YOU HAVE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY:**

- **STAY BY YOUR TELEPHONE AND DO NOT TIE UP THE LINE SO WE CAN CALL YOU BACK.**
- **READ THIS BOOKLET BEFORE YOU CALL.**
- **TAKE YOUR TEMPERATURE BEFORE YOU CALL.**
- **HAVE THE TELEPHONE NUMBER OF A LOCAL PHARMACY (WHICH IS CURRENTLY OPEN) AVAILABLE WHEN YOU CALL.**

**If you do not have an emergency, please call us during normal business hours. Our staff will be happy to discuss your situation and we will have access to your chart in the clinic.**

**THANK YOU FOR LETTING US SERVE YOUR NEEDS. PLEASE KNOW IF YOU OR A FRIEND SHOULD EVER NEED OUR SERVICES IN THE FUTURE, WE WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASSIST YOU AT CHOICE.**