

TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY

Referral for a Termination

- **Sexual Health D&G can refer you** for a termination
- **or self refer** by contacting Women's Outpatient Dept on **01387 241200** weekdays 9am – 4.30pm.

(Please note that Sexual Health D&G does not offer a termination service, but as stated above, can refer on. Furthermore, the nurses and doctors at Sexual Health D&G are here to talk over the options with you.)

If it is not possible to have a termination under the NHS or you wish to go privately, arrangements can be made through the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) or Marie Stopes UK. Funding is only available if the referral is via the NHS.

What are my options if I am undecided about a termination?

We will discuss the long-term implications of all the options available to you. Your options are:

- Continue with the pregnancy and keep the baby.
- Continue with the pregnancy and have the baby temporarily fostered or permanently adopted.
- Consider having the pregnancy terminated.

It is important that you do not feel pressured by anyone else and that you think carefully about all the implications of the decision you make. It is also often helpful to discuss the options with your partner, a friend or your family. There are other services that can help; see 'Useful Contacts' section.

What will happen when I am seen at the hospital?

Your initial appointment will be either at the Women and Children's Dept at DGRI or Oak tree family centre.

No treatment will be started at this initial visit. An assessment will be made and if appropriate, you will have an ultrasound scan. This will confirm how many weeks pregnant you are, and will check that the pregnancy is not going to be a miscarriage (pregnancy failure) or a tubal (ectopic) pregnancy. Not everyone will need an ultrasound scan.

We will ask you to attend with a comfortably full bladder to help with the scan. Most scans are abdominal (tummy) scans, but if you are very early in the pregnancy you will require a transvaginal (internal) scan. The person carrying out the scan will not routinely show you the scan image. If you wish to see the scan, please tell the staff member.

What are the methods of termination?

There are 2 methods of terminating a pregnancy – 'medical' and 'surgical'. The most appropriate method will depend on what stage of pregnancy you are at.

Early Medical Abortion at Home (EMAH)

During your first consultation, we will assess if you are suitable to undergo EMAH. If you are suitable for this option, and wish to do the treatment at home, we will explain the medication to you, and make sure you know what to expect. This is done 2 days apart. You only need to attend the hospital once whereby you will be given a tablet to take orally and we will prepare a treatment pack for you, which will contain the medicines needed for the treatment at home to be used 24-48 hours later and a pregnancy test with instructions. You will have heavy bleeding and pass the pregnancy at home, usually a few hours after the second part of the treatment. We usually advise that you have someone with you for support on the day of the second medication.

To be suitable for early medical abortion at home, you will need to meet certain criteria:

- Be under 10 weeks pregnant at the time of treatment
- Be 16 years of age or over
- Be in good general health, with no significant previous pregnancy problems
- Have a phone so you can call for advice if needed
- Have access to transport so that you can go to clinic/hospital if you are concerned
- Agree to do a follow-up pregnancy test after 3 weeks.

Medical termination up to 20 weeks of pregnancy

This is the most common method. It involves taking a tablet by mouth and placing a pessary in the vagina to cause the contents of the womb to be expelled, similar to having a miscarriage.

1st visit: You will be given a tablet called mifepristone to swallow. If you are sick within 1 hour you will need to take the tablet again.

2nd visit: 24–48 hours after the first visit, you will go to the ward and a pessary called misoprostol will be inserted into the vagina. This causes the womb to contract and the pregnancy to be expelled. Most women will be home the same day, but you may need to stay overnight.

Surgical termination up to 13 weeks of pregnancy

This involves a minor operation under general anaesthetic, which is usually done as a day case. Before the operation, a pessary (misoprostol) is placed in your vagina to soften the neck of the womb. Then, under general anaesthetic the doctor will remove the pregnancy tissue from your womb using a small suction tube. You are usually able to go home later the same day but occasionally you may need to stay overnight.

Termination more than 20 weeks

If you are more than 20 weeks pregnant, a termination of pregnancy cannot be carried out in Dumfries and Galloway. The Women and Children's Service will refer you to the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) to arrange further care through them. If you decide to go ahead with a termination of pregnancy at this stage, you will need to travel to a BPAS centre in England for the procedure.

Follow up

If you have a lot of pain and bleeding or are running a high temperature, it is important that you contact your GP or the hospital. It is recommended that you do a pregnancy test 3 weeks after your termination to confirm that you are no longer pregnant.

OTHER ISSUES

Contraception

It is important that you make arrangements for reliable contraception after the termination.

The contraceptive injection and the implant can be administered before you leave the hospital.

The contraceptive pill can be given to you too; it can be started the day you leave hospital.

Alternatively, an appointment can be made for a coil to be fitted at Sexual Health D&G 3 weeks after the procedure. The coil can also be inserted at the time of surgical abortion.

Future fertility

Current evidence suggests that having a termination is not likely to affect your future fertility.

Emotional upset

Having a termination can be a very upsetting experience and you may feel you need additional support to help with your emotions. You can speak with your GP about this or return to the Sexual Health Clinic.

Confidentiality

It is better if your own GP is informed of the situation but if you have strong feelings about this, speak to the doctor or nurse at the clinic or hospital and they will make sure that no contact is made. Parents and partners are not informed unless you so wish, though it is difficult for those under 16 years of age if a parent does not know.

Termination of Pregnancy – The Law

The 1967 Abortion Act allows an abortion to be legally performed under certain conditions up to 24 weeks of pregnancy. Two doctors have to agree that the conditions are met. The law requires that both the referring doctor and the gynaecologist sign a form indicating the grounds for your case where at least one of the following 5 grounds must be met:

- Your life is at greater risk if you continue with rather than terminate the pregnancy.
- Your physical or mental health is at greater risk if you continue with rather than terminate the pregnancy.
- The physical or mental health of any existing children of yours is at greater risk if you continue rather than terminate the pregnancy.
- There is a risk of grave permanent injury to your physical or mental health.
- There is a substantial risk that the child could suffer from serious physical or mental handicap

Termination of pregnancy is legally possible only up to 24 weeks:

- Terminations are carried out in D&G up until 20 wks.
- 20-24 week NHS terminations are carried out through the BPAS in England or can be arranged privately.
BPAS may offer consultations in Glasgow but procedures are carried out in England.

USEFUL CONTACTS

NHS 24 – 111

British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS)

Advice Line – 03457 30 40 30 included within 'free' minutes allowance.

Lines are open weekdays 7am-6pm; Saturdays 8am-4pm; Sundays 9.30am-2.30pm.

E-mail – info@bpas.org

Website – www.bpas.org

Marie Stopes International UK

Advice Line – 0845 300 8090

Website – www.mariestopes.org.uk

British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy

Website – www.bacp.co.uk

TOP Video

www.sexualhealthdg.co.uk/abortion.php

Self Referral for a Termination

Women's Outpatient Dept – NHS Dumfries & Galloway

01387 241200 (weekdays 9am – 4.30pm)

**If you have any concerns or require more information,
please contact Sexual Health D&G:**

Phone: **0345 702 3687**

Email: **dg.sexual-health@nhs.scot**

Website: **www.sexualhealthdg.co.uk**