

How to buy abortion pills that are safe and effective

10 COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



Abortion with pills is a safe and effective way to end a pregnancy, but you must use the right medications. There are many counterfeit and poor-quality abortion pills available. Here are 10 common questions and answers to help you find the right pills.

1 What medications can be used safely for an abortion with pills?

Two medications: mifepristone and misoprostol. They can be used together—or misoprostol can be used alone—to empty the uterus safely and effectively by starting a process similar to a miscarriage. When misoprostol is used alone, it is slightly less effective but still very safe.

2 What is the difference between mifepristone and misoprostol?

Mifepristone blocks some hormonal activity in the uterus and softens the cervix so the pregnancy comes out more easily. Misoprostol makes the uterus contract and push out the pregnancy.

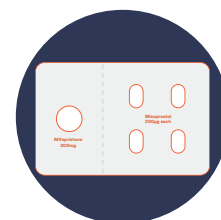


3 What do abortion pills look like?

Both mifepristone and misoprostol are sold in tablet or pill form. Misoprostol pills usually, but not always, have a unique six-sided shape. Mifepristone is usually a round, white pill. If someone is selling these medications in capsule form, they are not legitimate. (A capsule is a shell or container, usually made of gelatin, that contains a medication.)

4 What does mifepristone combined with misoprostol look like?

Where mifepristone is available, it is usually sold packaged together with misoprostol as a “combi-pack.” Combi-packs are rarely counterfeit.



5 What is a “blister pack” and why is it important?

This is a way of packaging medicines where individual pills are sealed in a “bubble” between two layers of material. Misoprostol becomes less effective when exposed to heat and moisture, so it must be sealed in double-aluminum blister packs (aluminum on top and bottom)—not in cardboard or plastic. The aluminum should be sealed on all sides until you’re ready to use the pills.

6 How much do the pills cost?

Misoprostol is widely available, so it's generally not very expensive. Manufacturers sell the pills to pharmacies for very little cost—less than \$0.05 USD (5 cents) per pill. The highest sales price found in a recent study was \$2 USD per pill. If you live in a low- or middle-income country where combi-packs of mifepristone and misoprostol are available, one package should cost less than \$20 USD.

7 How many pills do I need to buy?

If you have access to both mifepristone and misoprostol, you will need 1 mifepristone pill of 200mg and at least 4 misoprostol pills of 200mcg each. If you are 10–12 weeks pregnant, you may need to take 1 or 2 extra doses (4 or 8 extra pills) of misoprostol to finish the abortion process. If you have access to misoprostol only, you will need at least 12 misoprostol pills of 200mcg each if you are less than 13 weeks pregnant.

8 How can I know if the pills are real and not counterfeit?

Safe, effective abortion pills should be:

- ✓ The color white
- ✓ Pills or tablets, NOT capsules
- ✓ Packaged in an undamaged, double-aluminum blister pack, ideally
- ✓ Sold to you by a pharmacy or medicine seller you trust
- ✓ Not expired (an expiration date should be on the package)

9 Can I buy abortion pills without a prescription?

Depending on where you live, a prescription may be required to buy mifepristone and misoprostol—but the two medications are often sold without a prescription. Misoprostol is typically easier to buy because it is also used to treat ulcers and to prevent or stop heavy bleeding after childbirth. Mifepristone and misoprostol “combi-packs” and misoprostol alone can sometimes be bought from online pharmacies and organizations that support people to self-manage their abortions.

10 Where can I find more information on abortion with pills?

Reliable, evidence-based information can be found here:

www.ipas.org/AbortionWithPills

There are also these reliable mobile apps available in the Apple App Store and Google Play Store:

- Euki—Sexual health info & tracking
- Safe Abortion (SA)—Hesperian Health Guides

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