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# THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS



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## THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS



After you have had an abortion, you are certain to have questions about your health and well-being. Perhaps, you also want to know how to avoid another unplanned pregnancy in the future. This brochure will answer most of these questions.

### What can I expect after the procedure?

During the first seven to ten days after the procedure, you may experience:

- cramps, bleeding or spotting for up to 4 weeks,
- mild nausea or vomiting,
- sadness or depression.

These symptoms are normal reactions to the procedure brought on by hormonal changes. Pain-killers can help alleviate the discomfort, along with rest.

### How do I take care of myself?

- Rest
- Eat healthy foods
- Avoid strenuous exercise or activities; do not lift heavy objects
- No douching
- No sex and no tampons during the first 7 days
- Take all prescribed medications as directed by your doctor.

## Danger Signs

Contact your doctor immediately, if you experience:

- bleeding that completely soaks two sanitary pads in two hours
- blood clots from vagina that are larger than 5 cm in diameter
- A temperature of 39 degrees C or more for over four hours
- Chills
- Nausea and/or vomiting for over 4 hours
- Severe abdominal pain that will not stop
- Vaginal discharge with an unpleasant smell
- Absence of menstruation for six weeks
- Feeling sad or depressed

### When will my period start again?

Your period will begin in 4 – 6 weeks.

### When can I get pregnant after an abortion?

Your fertility (ability to get pregnant) will return 11 days after the abortion. If you want to get pregnant, it is recommended to wait at least six months before becoming pregnant again to allow for your body to rest and help the next pregnancy to be healthier. To avoid an unwanted pregnancy, talk to your doctor about modern contraception and start using a method right after an abortion. One of the methods of contraception below will certainly be right for you! All modern

methods of contraception, when chosen properly, are safer than an abortion for your health.

*This brochure will also tell about the most common contraceptive methods in Armenia suitable for postabortion women.*

## Intrauterine Device (IUD)



### What is the IUD?

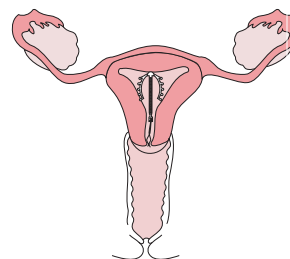
The IUD is a small plastic device that is inserted into the uterus. Modern models of the IUD are made from plastic and contain copper, silver or progestin (synthetic hormone).

### How does the IUD work?

The IUD makes harder for sperm to move, thus reducing its ability to fertilize the egg, as well as prevents implantation of the fertilized egg.

### What are advantages of using IUD?

IUD is safe, comfortable, and highly effective (about 98-99%). IUD is inserted by a gynecologist. It is an easy out-patient procedure that does not require anesthesia. Depending on the type of IUD, it can prevent pregnancy from 5 to 10 years. In order to become pregnant you must go to your doctor to have the IUD removed. A pregnancy can occur shortly after IUD is removed.



## When can I begin to use IUD?

You can have an IUD inserted on the day of the abortion, if there is no infection. If there is a chance you have an infection, you will need treatment first. An IUD can be inserted three months after your infection is cured and you are not pregnant.

## Any possible problems?

Sometimes menstrual bleeding becomes heavier and more painful. Women with multiple sexual partners may not be a good candidate for IUD use. The IUD does not offer protection against Sexually Transmitted Infections, including HIV/AIDS.



## Male Condoms

### How does condom work?

Condom acts as a barrier to prevent sperm from meeting the egg.

### What are advantages of using condom?

It prevents pregnancy and protects against Sexually Transmitted Infections, including HIV/AIDS. Condoms are safe and 86% effective in preventing pregnancy. If used consistently and correctly every time you have sex, its effectiveness increases. Condoms are safe and have practically no side effects. High quality condoms have

virtually no adverse effect on sensation.

## When can I begin to use a condom after abortion?

As soon as you resume sexual activity following the procedure.

## How do I use condom?

Use condom with each act of sexual intercourse. It needs to be rolled down over an erect penis before coitus, leaving a small reserve at the tip for sperm to collect. Don't use one condom more than once, and be sure to check the expiration date on the package. Don't use any lubricants made of vegetable or synthetic oils (like Vaseline, for example). If the condom package is torn, if the condom is dry or sticky to the touch, don't use it.

## Any possible problems?

In rare cases people are allergic to latex. Sometimes it is hard to talk to your partner about using a condom, but the embarrassment goes away. – Condom acts as a barrier to prevent sperm from meeting the egg.



## How do birth control pills work?

Birth control pills contain the same hormones that are produced by a woman's body. These hormones prevent ovulation, make it difficult for the sperm to reach the egg, and interfere with implantation of the fertilized egg.

## What are advantages of using pills?

The pills are 95-99% effective; you can use them for a long time without any breaks. In recent years, birth control pills have been

changed to have less hormones, resulting in fewer side effects. Woman's ability to get pregnant returns almost immediately after a woman stops taking the pills. The pills make menstruation shorter and lighter and protect against certain cancers.

### **When can I begin to use pills after abortion?**

You can begin taking the pill on the day of abortion, within first 7-days following abortion, or any time when you are absolutely certain that you are not pregnant. Use a back up contraceptive method (e.g. condom) for the first seven days after take your first pill.

### **How do I use the pill?**

Take it every day at the same time. If you forget to take one pill, take it as soon as you remember, and another one according to the schedule. If you forgot to take two or more pills, take two pills daily until you return to your schedule, but in this case you should also consult your doctor. Immediately use a back-up method for seven days if you miss taking your pills for two days in a row.

### **Any possible problems?**

When starting on the pills some women might experience slight nausea, headache, a weight gain of 1-1.5 kilos, and breast tenderness, but these symptoms usually disappear after three months of use. Even if you have some problems, don't immediately give up on the pill. Today there are many kinds of pills, and your doctor may change your prescription. The pills do not offer protection against Sexually Transmitted Infections, including

HIV/AIDS. Of course, the pill isn't right for all women. If you are a smoker and over 35 years old, if you have high blood pressure, certain uncommon serious diseases of the heart and blood vessels, certain active liver diseases, or if you are a nursing mother, your doctor may not recommend hormonal contraception.



### **What are spermicides?**

Spermicides are substances that destroy sperm. You can find them in pharmacies as cream, jelly, suppositories, tablets, film or aerosol foam.



### **What are advantages of using spermicides?**

Spermicides are safe, come in different preparations and can be kept available for immediate protection if you have intercourses infrequently or after long intervals. When spermicides used alone, they are 73% effective in preventing pregnancy. If used with condoms, the effectiveness increases.

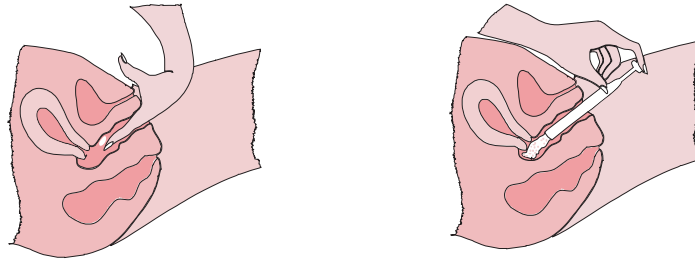
### **When can I begin to use spermicides after abortion?**

As soon as you resume sexual activity following the procedure.

### **How do spermicides work?**

Place spermicide inside vagina no more than one hour before the intercourse. Insert new application each time you have intercourse.

Leave spermicide in place for at least 6 hours after intercourse.



### **Any possible problems?**

In rare instances people are allergic to spermicidal products.

Most women don't like abortion and for a good reason. It can be painful and harmful to a woman's health.

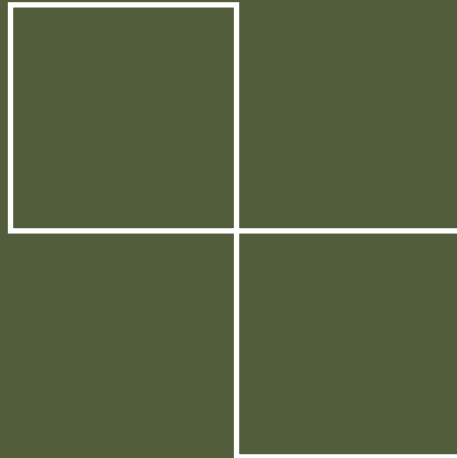
**Using modern methods of contraception to prevent an unwanted pregnancy is safer, easier, and cheaper than another abortion – and it gives you a peace of mind.**

**See your doctor to choose a method of contraception that is right for you! All modern methods of contraception, when chosen properly, are safer than an abortion for your health.**

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