

Using Misoprostol for **SELF-MANAGED ABORTION**

In the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that people who want to manage their abortion via misoprostol take a total of 12 misoprostol tablets (200 mcg each). These tablets are administered four at a time, under the tongue, and allowed to dissolve for 30 minutes, every three hours. The WHO protocol is summarized in the following steps:



- 1. Place four pills (200 micrograms each) under the tongue for 30 minutes while tablets dissolve. Swallow the remnants of the pills after 30 minutes.**
- 2. After three hours, place four pills (200 micrograms each) under the tongue for 30 minutes while tablets dissolve. Swallow the remnants of the pills after 30 minutes.**
- 3. After another three hours, place four pills (200 micrograms each) under the tongue for 30 minutes while tablets dissolve. Swallow the remnants of the pills after 30 minutes.**

The treatment of complications of abortion with pills is exactly the same as the treatment for complications of miscarriage. There are no tests that can detect misoprostol, and there is no reason to tell a medical provider that a woman has managed her own abortion with pills. To date, there have been at least 20 arrests of women who have ended their own pregnancy outside a medical setting in the United States. A woman, therefore, should not tell medical personnel that she has taken misoprostol or she may be at legal risk.

A woman will know the medication is working when she experiences the following side effects: cramps, menstrual bleeding, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Though rare, complications can occur. Signs of complications include:

- **Heavy bleeding that lasts for more than two hours and soaks more than two sanitary pads per hour**
- **Severe pain that does not go away after hours of taking the medications**
- **A fever of over 102 degree Fahrenheit**
- **Vaginal discharge that smells bad**

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For more facts on self-managed abortion or protocols for mifepristone plus misoprostol, see our other fact sheets available on our website.