



Atlanta Women's Center

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INFORMATION REGARDING THE D & E PROCEDURE

The procedure consists of two parts: dilation followed by evacuation (D & E). Dilation means a slow and gentle enlargement of the opening of the cervix. It begins by inserting laminaria, a sterile substance of compressed seaweed, that gradually swell in size over a number of hours. The next morning, at the second appointment, the physician removes the laminaria and completes the abortion procedure with a suction method combined with special instrumentation. Each visit takes approximately two hours.

The D & E procedure is more complex than an early abortion procedure, but compared with continuing your pregnancy to term, the D & E has less risk of serious complications.

When your initial appointment is made, our trained staff and counselors will give you instructions as to the time and how to prepare for your visit to our Center. Some of the information you will receive is as follows:

To be sure of the exact stage of your pregnancy, a pelvic examination along with an ultrasound will be performed. The ultrasound is an instrument that uses sound waves to accurately determine the length of time you have been pregnant. A complete medical history along with a physical assessment and laboratory tests are taken. A counseling session with information as well as informed consent will take place, and finally the physician will begin the abortion procedure with the laminaria insertion.

Following your first visit to the Center, you will be given written instructions preparing you for the second appointment, which is usually early the next morning. You are requested to stay nearby during the time the laminaria are in place. The person you select should come to the Center with you for both parts of the procedure. That person should stay with you between parts one and two, accompanying you to and from the Center, and stay with you until after the second part is completed.

YOU MUST RETURN AT THE APPOINTED TIME FOR REMOVAL OF THE LAMINARIA.

If you do not, serious complications could result. It is also important for you to know that once laminaria are inserted, the abortion procedure has begun and must be completed.

After the second part of the procedure, you will spend at least an hour in the recovery room for observation. When you are ready to be discharged, you will receive two medications to take with you; an antibiotic and a drug to control bleeding. You will be given written instructions that tell you what to expect for the next two weeks, and then your follow-up exam will be scheduled.

Although there is a good deal of information to adequately prepare you for this procedure, you must remember that as a Health Care consumer information is very important to you. There is no "silly" question or "uninformed" question where your health is concerned, and we are dedicated to assisting you in your decision making in a professional and caring manner.