

After a dilation and evacuation (D&E)

What problems should I watch for?

Call your doctor or the hospital if you:

- › Have fever higher than 100.4° F or chills
- › Have very heavy bleeding (soaking 1 thick overnight pad an hour for 2 straight hours)
- › Have bad cramps that don't go away after you take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, etc.) or acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- › Have green or yellow discharge
- › Pass many blood clots larger than a quarter

How should I take care of myself over the next days and weeks?

- › Get plenty of rest today and avoid heavy lifting or exercise for a few days.
- › Avoid infection: To decrease the chance of getting a serious infection do not put anything in your vagina for 2 weeks (no sex, tampons, or douching).

What physical symptoms can I expect?

It is normal to have bleeding and cramps. You may bleed for 6 weeks after your procedure. The flow may vary from very light to fairly heavy. You may bleed more when you exercise or lift heavy objects. You should bleed less when you rest.

You might have cramps for a few days. Take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, etc.) or Tylenol, rest and you may want to put a hot water bottle or heating pad on your belly or back to help you feel better.

You received ibuprofen after your D&E. You can take one pill every 6-8 hours for pain. Make sure you eat something before taking this or your stomach may get upset. If your pain does not get better with the medication we gave you, call for a prescription for stronger medication.

It is normal to have swollen breasts and have milk letdown 3–5 days after your procedure. You will feel more comfortable if you wear a tight bra (such as a sports bra) even at night and do not express milk. If you are uncomfortable, apply cold ice packs to your breasts and/or take ibuprofen or acetaminophen. If you still feel pregnant after a week, you should call us. Breast engorgement (swollen with milk) can cause a mild fever. If your temperature is higher than 100.4° F, call to speak with a doctor.

It is normal to not have another period for 4–7 weeks after your procedure. You can get pregnant before then and should use birth control when you resume sexual intercourse. Also, some women say that their next period after the procedure is a little heavier than usual. This is normal.

How should I expect to feel emotionally?

Different people will experience different feelings after their D&E procedure. Women have feelings that can range from feelings of sadness, loss and grief, to feelings of relief that a stressful situation has been resolved. *There is no right or wrong way to feel.* If you are having trouble coping with your emotions after the procedure, feel free to call us and we can refer you to someone who can help you work through what you are experiencing.

Source: Center for Reproductive Health at the University of Illinois Hospital & Health Sciences System

FROM THE
PAGES OF

Contemporary
OB/GYN
Expert Advice for Today's Ob/Gyn
ContemporaryOBGYN.net