PIPADOR REVISION

MRCOG Part 1 Revision Notes

Abortifacients

PHARMACOLOGY • LECTURE 375

VISUAL EXAMINATION REVISION NOTES

2026 Edition

MRCOG PART 1 REVISION NOTES | PHARMACOLOGY

375 Abortifacients

Pharmacology of mifepristone and prostaglandins, regimens for abortion and miscarriage, cautions and legal aspects

Mifepristone	Misoprostol	≈ 95–98%	Home use
Progesterone receptor antagonist	PGE_1 analogue	Success ≤ 9–10 wk	Up to 10 weeks (UK)

■ KEY FACTS: Learning objectives

- Describe the pharmacology of mifepristone, misoprostol and other agents acting on the pregnant uterus.
- Describe regimens for medical abortion and management of miscarriage/IUFD.
- Describe contraindications, side effects and legal/clinical aspects (NICE NG140).

375.1 Mechanisms

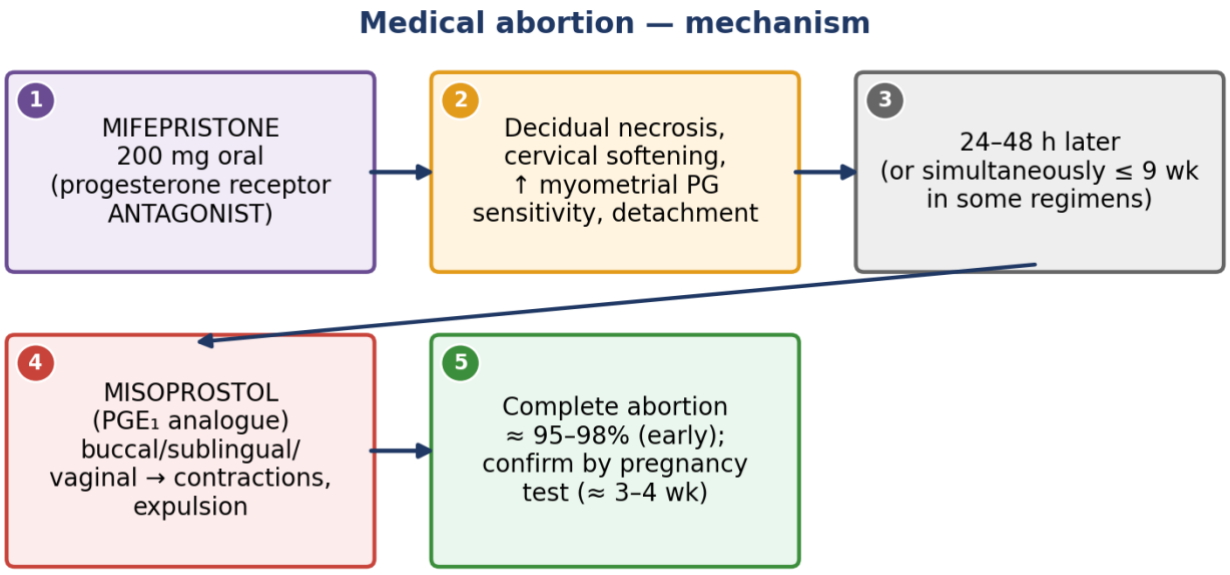


Figure 375.1 — Mechanism of medical abortion

Drug	Pharmacology	Side effects / cautions
Mifepristone	Antiprogestogen (also antiglucocorticoid) — decidual breakdown, cervical ripening, ↑ uterine sensitivity to PGs	• Nausea, bleeding • Caution adrenal insufficiency, long-term steroids, severe asthma on steroids, porphyria
Misoprostol	PGE_1 analogue — contractions, cervical ripening; heat-stable, cheap	• Diarrhoea, fever/chills, pain • **Uterine rupture risk with CS scar at later gestations** (reduce dose) • Teratogenic if pregnancy continues (Möbius, limb defects)
Gemeprost	PGE_1 pessary	Rarely used now

Drug	Pharmacology	Side effects / cautions
Dinoprostone	PGE_2	Induction of labour
Methotrexate	Folate antagonist (trophoblast)	Ectopic pregnancy (not UK first-line abortion)
Oxytocin	Uterotonic	Later gestations; weak in early pregnancy (few receptors)

375.2 Regimens and uses

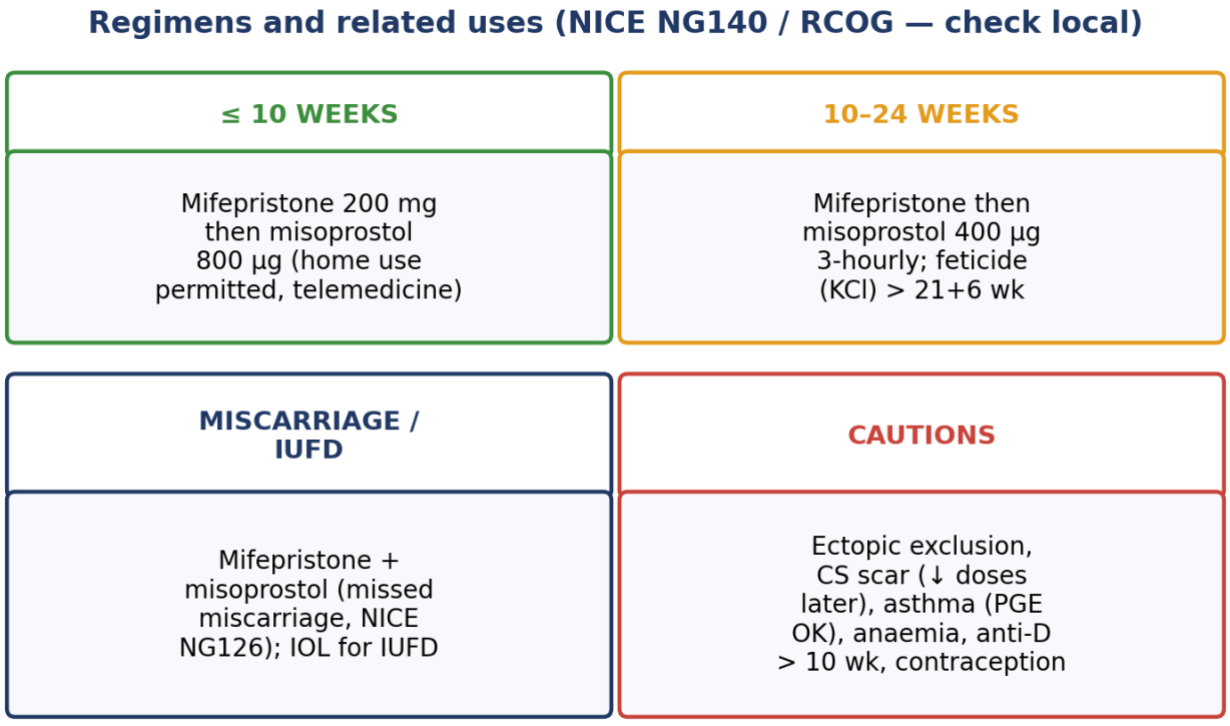


Figure 375.2 — Regimens and related uses

- UK law: Abortion Act 1967 (amended 1990) — 2 doctors' signatures
  - Most under ground C (< 24 weeks)
  - Telemedicine and home use of both medicines up to 10 weeks.
- Before treatment: confirm gestation (scan if uncertain/ectopic risk), Rh status (anti-D > 10 weeks for medical abortion), STI screening, contraception plan (implant/injectable can be started with mifepristone; IUD after expulsion).
- Pain relief: NSAIDs (do not reduce efficacy); follow-up low-sensitivity pregnancy test at ≈ 3–4 weeks.

375.3 Must-know summary

■ EXAM TIP

- Mifepristone (progesterone receptor antagonist) primes; misoprostol (PGE_1) expels.
- ≤ 10 weeks: mifepristone 200 mg then misoprostol 800 µg (home use); later: repeated misoprostol 400 µg.
- Misoprostol: diarrhoea, fever, scar rupture risk; teratogenic if continuing.
- Missed miscarriage: mifepristone + misoprostol (NICE NG126).

■ **MNEMONIC / MEMORY AID**

'Mife Makes ready, Miso Moves it out'.