

Post-Abortion Care

Post-abortion Care (PAC) is an integrated service delivery model that includes both maternal health and family planning interventions and is curative and preventative. As part of a larger reproductive health strategy, PAC can be vital in reducing the unmet need for FP, which can prevent future unplanned/mistimed pregnancies, decrease the incidence of repeat abortion and miscarriage and decrease maternal morbidity and mortality.



Step 1: Treatment of incomplete and unsafe abortion

If a woman comes to a trained service provider in an emergency, it is her right to obtain quality services under a comfortable environment. The provider must determine and identify the emergency need and provide adequate services to women who have incomplete and unsafe abortion and/or abortion-related complications. In an emergency, either a manual vacuum aspiration (MVA) is conducted (doctors and LHVs can perform) or surgery in case of abortion-related complications (only surgeons can perform) and timely referral for appropriate services not available at the facility, including family planning services if they are not available.



Step 2: Counseling to identify and respond to women's emotional and physical health needs

Physical counseling in PAC involves self-care, any other health-related issues such as treatment of infection, anemia, post-abortion complications, etc. and adopting a family planning method for a minimum of 6 months so the woman can regain her health. It is also the service provider's responsibility to maintain her client's confidentiality.



Step 3: Family planning counseling and referral

After completing a successful MVA, the service provider should counsel the women on the importance of family planning and explain their choices. A minimum of 6 months of spacing is critical in PAC. If the service provider cannot provide family planning services for any particular reason, she must refer her to another reliable service provider.



Step 4: Community and service provider partnerships to prevent unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions

Since family planning discussions are often taboo in Pakistan, especially regarding abortion and PAC, community influencers and service providers must create a safe space for women needing such services to avert unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions.