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MISOPROSTOL FOR THE TREATMENT OF POSTPARTUM HEMORRHAGE

Misoprostol has been shown to be an effective treatment for postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) if administered sublingually.



Adapted from image provided courtesy of Ipas

5 things you should know about the sublingual route

1. EVIDENCE-BASED

Two large randomized controlled trials showed the efficacy of 800 mcg of misoprostol given sublingually to treat postpartum hemorrhage. There are no large, randomized clinical trials (RCTs) testing any other route.

2. EASY TO ADMINISTER

When misoprostol is taken sublingually, the woman holds the pills under her tongue for 20 – 30 minutes. Any remaining pill fragments can be swallowed. This route is easy for providers and feasible for women who are unconscious.

3. WORKS QUICKLY

In treating PPH, rapid induction of uterine contractions is desirable and is best achieved through the sublingual route which has the fastest absorption, highest serum levels, and highest bioavailability. In the two large RCTs, misoprostol administered by the sublingual route controlled postpartum hemorrhage within 20 minutes for 9 out of 10 women.

4. MANAGEABLE SIDE EFFECTS

Shivering and fever are common after administration of misoprostol. Studies have shown that these side-effects are transient and easily managed. Vomiting after pills are given sublingually is infrequent and does not interfere with treatment.

5. ACCEPTABLE TO WOMEN

Studies have shown that women are satisfied with sublingual administration of misoprostol and have little difficulty holding the pills under their tongues.