

Emergency Contraception (Pills)

What is Emergency Contraception?

Pregnancy can be prevented after intercourse by taking emergency contraceptive pills (EC). EC is commonly known as the “morning after” pill. It works by giving the body a short, high burst of synthetic hormones, which disrupt hormone patterns needed for pregnancy. EC disturbs the ovaries and the development of the uterine lining, making pregnancy less likely. EC is 75-89% effective. EC does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS. EC does not interfere with an already established pregnancy; therefore, it does not cause an abortion.

Brands of Pills

Plan B is one brand of EC which contains two progesterone pills. Plan B-One Step is the newly approved brand of EC that has only one progesterone pill. Birth control pills that have both estrogen and progesterone can also be used for EC. Choose only one type of pill to take for EC. The dosage information for common brands of birth control pills is listed in the chart below. Some birth control packages have several different colors. It is important to take the exact color as specified on this chart. Brands not listed have not been tested for their effectiveness.

Use of EC

The FDA has approved several types of pills for EC. Older types are to be taken in two separate doses. The first dose of EC is taken within 120 hours (5 days) of unprotected intercourse (most effective if taken within the first 24 hours). The second dose is taken 12 hours later. EC may be taken after 120 hours, but its effectiveness is much lower. The earlier it is taken, the more effective it is.

Recently the FDA approved a new EC pill that is only one pill, taken in one dose. When taken within 72 hours (3 days) of unprotected intercourse, this one step EC is highly effective. Seven out of eight women who would have gotten pregnant will not get pregnant after taking it.

If you vomit within a half hour of taking EC, contact your doctor because vomiting can decrease the effectiveness of EC. Some recommend taking an anti-vomiting medication 30 minutes before taking the first dose. If using birth control pills for EC, take them with food to help prevent nausea.

After Taking EC

After taking EC, your next menstrual period should begin within 2 or 3 weeks. After two weeks, you can take a pregnancy test. If your period does not come within 3 weeks or if you are pregnant, visit your clinic. If taking birth control pills after EC, start a new pack of pills on the first day of your menstrual period or on the Sunday after the first day of your period. Take one pill every day.

Side Effects

Common side effects for women who use birth control pills for EC are nausea, vomiting, headaches, breast tenderness, dizziness, fluid retention and irregular bleeding. These side effects usually disappear after 1-2 days. These side effects are rare when Plan B or Plan B-One Step are used. Women may experience changes in their period after taking EC. In some cases, the next period may be heavier or lighter, earlier or later. It is important to have a pregnancy test if your next period does not come within 3 weeks because a pregnancy may have occurred.



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Your Health

There are no medical contraindications for taking EC pills, except pregnancy. If a woman is already pregnant, EC pills are not effective, but will not harm the pregnancy. EC pills do not protect against HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Availability

Plan B is available over the counter (OTC) to women 18 years and older while Plan B-One Step is available OTC to women 17 years and older. Both are available by prescription to women under the OTC age requirement. Birth control pills are not sold over the counter and require a prescription from your health care provider or clinic. It is a good idea to call ahead to the pharmacy to see if they have Plan B or Plan B-One Step available.

Advantages of EC

- Can be used *after* intercourse.
- Can use regular birth control pills
- Can get pills ahead of time
- Easy to use.
- Does not affect future fertility

Disadvantages of EC

- Does not protect against STIs, including HIV/AIDS
- Must be taken within 120 hours
- May cause nausea
- Must be readily available

Future Fertility

EC does not prevent future pregnancies and is less effective than other methods of birth control. If you want to prevent future pregnancies, condoms and spermicide are

easily available options. You can buy them over the counter and you don't have to wait for the start of your next period. Your health care provider can help you decide what birth control method is most effective and best fits your lifestyle.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Emergency Contraception Website:
<http://ec.princeton.edu>.

Back Up Your Birth Control Website:
www.backupyourbirthcontrol.org.

Plan B ® Website: www.go2planb.com.

Michigan

To find a **Title X Family Planning Clinic** in Michigan, go to
www.michigan.gov/familyplanning.

To find a **Planned Parenthood Clinic** in Michigan, go to
www.miplannedparenthood.org/about.htm.

United States

To find an EC health care provider in the U.S., call the **EC Hotline** at **1-800-584-9911** or visit their website at
<http://ec.princeton.edu/get-ec-now.html>.
The hotline is available 24 hours a day in Spanish and English.

To find a **Planned Parenthood Clinic** in the U.S., go to
www.plannedparenthood.org/index.htm.

To find a **Title X Family Planning Clinic** in the U.S., go to
www.hhs.gov/opa/familyplanning.



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Birth Control Pills as Emergency Contraception

| Brand of Emergency Contraception Pill | First (1 st) Dose Take within 120 hours of intercourse | Second (2 nd) Dose Take 12 hours after first (1 st) dose |
|--|---|---|
| Plan B <i>(Over-the-counter - women 18 years & up)</i> <i>(Prescription - women 17 & younger.)</i> | 1 pill | 1 pill |
| Plan B – One Step <i>(Over-the-counter - women 17 years & up)</i> <i>(Prescription - women 16 & younger.)</i> | 1 Dose ONLY Take 1 pill within 120 hours of intercourse | ----- |
| Brand of Birth Control Pill that can be used for EC <i>(available only by prescription)</i> | First (1 st) Dose Take within 120 hours of intercourse | Second (2 nd) Dose Take 12 hours after first (1 st) dose |
| Allesse | 5 pink pills | 5 pink pills |
| Aviane | 5 orange pills | 5 orange pills |
| Cryelle | 4 white pills | 4 white pills |
| Enpresse | 4 orange pills | 4 orange pills |
| Jolessa | 4 pink pills | 4 pink pills |
| Lessina | 5 pink pills | 5 pink pills |
| Levlen | 4 light-orange pills | 4 light-orange pills |
| Levlite | 5 pink pills | 5 pink pills |
| Levora | 4 white pills | 4 white pills |
| Lo/Ovral | 4 white pills | 4 white pills |
| LoSeasonique | 5 orange pills | 5 orange pills |
| Low-Ogestrel | 4 white pills | 4 white pills |
| Lutera | 5 white pills | 5 white pills |
| Lybrel | 6 yellow pills | 6 yellow pills |
| Nordette | 4 light-orange pills | 4 light-orange pills |
| Ogestrel | 2 white pills | 2 white pills |
| Ovral | 2 white pills | 2 white pills |
| Portia | 4 pink pills | 4 pink pills |
| Quasense | 4 white pills | 4 white pills |
| Seasonale | 4 pink pills | 4 pink pills |
| Seasonique | 4 light-blue-green pills | 4 light-blue-green pills |
| Sronyx | 5 white pills | 5 white pills |
| Tri-Levlen | 4 yellow pills | 4 yellow pills |
| Triphasil | 4 yellow pills | 4 yellow pills |
| Trivora | 4 pink pills | 4 pink pills |