

EC Basics

If taken within 24 hours of unprotected sex, emergency contraception (EC) is 95% effective. It's safer than aspirin and can be used up to 120 hours after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy. Since this is a prescription pill in most states, it's smart to ask for EC at your student health center or from your doctor before you need it, in case the condom breaks on a Friday. Or a Saturday. Or a Sunday.

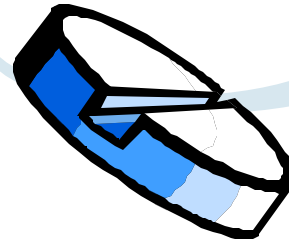
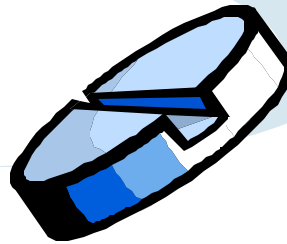
Advance Rx For EC



Advance prescriptions are written during routine check-ups so that a woman can always have a prescription or the medication on-hand.

Advance prescriptions offer women quick access to EC pills-when the efficacy is greatest. Advance prescriptions also give women access to EC on weekends or outside regular doctor's hours. However, only 20% of OB/GYNs report having discussed EC with patients during regular exams.

For more info, visit:
www.rhtp.org/news_archive/news_ec_acog.htm.



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Emergency Contraception



***99% effective at preventing pregnancy when used properly**

Condoms are a great form of birth control, but no product is 100% effective.

Learn the basics of EC to make sure you're always protected.

What is Emergency Contraception (EC)?

Emergency contraception (EC) is a method of *preventing* pregnancy after unprotected sexual intercourse - when a condom breaks, after a sexual assault, or any time unprotected sexual intercourse occurs. EC is effective at preventing pregnancy, however it *does not* protect against sexually transmitted infections.

There are different types of emergency contraceptive pills. Until recently, there have been 2 types of "dedicated" or pre-packaged pills, Plan B and Preven. Plan B contains the hormone progestin and is more effective than Preven, the other pre-packaged EC pill which contains the hormones estrogen and progestin. Plan B also causes fewer side effects such as nausea and vomiting. Preven was recently discontinued, but may still be on pharmacy shelves for a limited period of time.

In addition to Plan B and Preven, there are 12 brands of birth control pills that can prevent pregnancy when used as EC. The doses of pills vary, so it is important to check with a health care provider to make sure that the correct brand and dosage are used. For information about brands of oral contraceptives that can be used as EC and to find a provider in your area, visit www.not-2-late.com or call **1-888-Not-2-LATE**.

EC pills are often called "*morning-after pills*," but can be taken immediately after unprotected intercourse. Most women can safely use Plan B, even if they cannot use birth control pills as their regular method of contraception.

How Does EC Work?

While EC has often been referred to as the "*morning-after pill*," this phrase is misleading because - while most effective if taken within 24 hours- EC can be taken **up to 120 hours or 5 days** after unprotected intercourse, not just the next morning. The hormones in EC can delay or prevent ovulation or interfere with fertilization. Neither a pelvic examination nor a pregnancy test is required before treatment.

EC Is Extremely Safe and Effective

When taken within 24 hours of unprotected intercourse, EC is up to 95% effective. Overall, EC pills lower a woman's risk of becoming pregnant by 75-88%. EC has minimal side effects, the most common being nausea. However, anti-nausea medication can be taken an hour before the first dose of EC pills to reduce this side effect.

EC Is Essential to Women's Health and Lives

Emergency contraception is an important backup method of birth control because it increases women's control over their reproduction. According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, there are 3 million unintended pregnancies in the US each year. **EC has the potential to cut the number of unintended pregnancies in HALF and prevent as many as 800,000 abortions each year.**

Young Women Need Increased Access to EC

Many college health centers do not offer EC or are closed on the weekends, leaving women unable to find timely access to an EC provider. EC pills are extremely safe and over 70 medical and women's health organizations including the American Medical Association advocate for making them available over the counter. However, Alaska, California, Hawai'i, Maine, New Mexico and Washington are currently the only states that allow women to obtain EC without a prescription. **Some pharmacists and pharmacies have outright refused to fill prescriptions for EC pills** (Wal-Mart, among others). EC can prevent thousands of unintended pregnancies each year, but it must be taken as soon as possible. Young women must receive greater access to EC.

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