

Emergency Contraception (EC)

Q: What is Emergency Contraception?

A: Emergency Contraception (also called Morning-After Pill or Plan B) is a safe and effective form of hormonal birth control that a woman can use to prevent pregnancy after sex. EC can work up to five (5) days after unprotected sex, but it's more effective the sooner it's taken. EC can reduce the risk of pregnancy by 90% if taken within the first 12 hours, 75% if taken within the first 72 hours and 60% if taken within 120 hours. You can also have a copper IUD (ParaGard) inserted within 7 days of unprotected sex, which can prevent pregnancy in 99% of cases.

Q: How does EC work?

A: EC may work one of two ways. EC can delay or prevent ovulation so there is no egg for the sperm to fertilize so no chance for pregnancy to occur. EC can also keep the sperm from reaching the egg by changing the woman's vaginal and uterine lining. These combined make it harder for pregnancy to occur and help prevent pregnancy after sex. *EC does not cause abortion (does not work once pregnancy occurs)!!*

Q: Where can someone get EC and does one need a health insurance to get one?

A: If you're 17 or older, EC is available at many pharmacies WITHOUT a prescription, but it may be cheaper to have your doctor prescribe one for you. Currently if you're 16 or younger, you need a prescription to get EC from a pharmacy, though this may change soon.

Q: How much does the EC cost?

A: The price ranges from free at local clinics to \$30 to \$75 at a drug store or pharmacy. There are variety of forms other birth control pills you can use for EC that may be cheaper – call us as soon as you need EC!!

Q: Is EC as effective as regular (hormonal) birth control?

A: NO. While EC prevents pregnancy, it is not as effective as other forms of hormonal birth control. Condoms and regular ongoing birth control should be used to consistently prevent pregnancy before and/or during sex.

Q: Does EC protect a person from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV?

A: NO, it only helps prevent pregnancy. Condoms should be used to prevent transmission of STIs and HIV.

Q: Do I need my mom or dad's permission to get the Morning-After Pill?

A: NO. Under NC State Law, minors can get reproductive health care such as birth control and Emergency Contraception on their own, without parental permission or notification. North Carolina also has confidentiality laws that prohibit providers from telling parents if a minor has received any family planning services, including birth control and STI screening.

If you have sex when you have not been using any birth control or not taking your pill correctly, and the backup method fails (ie. condom breaks), you should use emergency contraception (EC) to prevent pregnancy. *Call the office immediately for an advice, for a prescription, or to schedule an IUD insertion.* Visit www.not-2-late.com or call **998-9060** for more information on EC.