

EC Basics

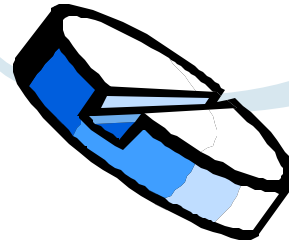
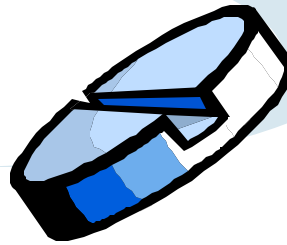
If taken within 24 hours of unprotected sex, emergency contraception (E.C.) can be 95% effective at preventing pregnancy. It's safer than aspirin and can be used up to 120 hours after unprotected sex. Since this is a prescription pill in most states until early 2007 when it will be available over-the-counter for women over age 18, it's smart to ask for E.C. prescription 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 women always have a prescription or the medication on-hand.

Advanced prescriptions offer women immediate 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



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Contact the Feminist Majority Foundation's
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Emergency Contraception



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

**Because 99% is not
always enough, there's
Emergency
Contraception**

**Condoms are a great form of birth
control, but they aren't infallible.
Learn the basics of E.C. 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 *does not* protect against sexually transmitted infections.

There is one type of prepackaged emergency contraception pill available today, Plan B®, It contains the hormone progestin.

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. While other forms of routine contraception are usually more effective and have less side effects, Plan B can be used repeatedly.

How Does EC Work?

While EC has often been referred to as the "morning-after pill," this phrase is misleading because EC can be taken **up to 120 hours** 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 can be 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 such side effects.

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.**

Several Brands of Birth Control Can Be Taken As EC

In addition to Plan B®, there are more than 20 brands of birth control pills that can prevent pregnancy when used as EC. The doses of birth control pills vary, so it is important to check with an accurate website of 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 emergency contraception, visit www.not-2-late.com.

Young Women Need Increased Access to EC

Women need a second chance to prevent an unintended pregnancy. In addition to Plan B not becoming available over-the-counter until early 2007 for women 18 and over, many college health centers do not offer EC or are closed on the weekends, leaving women unable to find an off-campus EC provider in a timely manner. Also, despite the fact that EC pills are extremely safe and over 70 medical and women's health organizations including the American Medical Association have advocated making them available over the counter, **some 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 within 120 hours. Young women must receive greater access to EC.

Here is what you can do:

- Conduct public education events about EC to inform your student body on how and where they can access EC.
- Advocate for your student health center and local pharmacies to keep EC in stock; if they refuse to provide it, organize demonstrations demanding access.
- Continue the fight for over-the-counter access for teens under the age of 18.

For more information, please visit www.overthecounterec.org.