

# EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

Pharmacist  
Information



## What is Emergency Contraception (EC)?

- ◆ EC reduces the risk of pregnancy after unprotected sex or contraception failure.
- ◆ Plan B®, Plan B® One-Step, and Next Choice™ are FDA approved products for EC.

## When is EC appropriate?

- ◆ EC is appropriate for patients who had sex and:
  - Did not use a method of birth control;
  - Used a condom that broke; or
  - Forgot to take 2 or more of their birth control pills
- ◆ EC is available as a prescription or nonprescription product. Men and women 17 years of age and older may obtain EC without a prescription. Women under the age of 17 need a prescription.
- ◆ There is no medical reason that EC cannot be used more than once, however EC should not be used as a regular birth control method to help prevent an unplanned pregnancy (see accompanying table).

## How does EC work?

- ◆ EC contains levonorgestrel –a hormone that is used in birth control pills.
- ◆ **EC is not an abortion pill.** It prevents pregnancy. It does not stop and won't affect an established pregnancy.
- ◆ Studies have demonstrated EC may be used up to five days after sex; it is less effective when there is a greater time interval between unprotected sex and taking EC.
  - If taken within 24 hours, there is a 95% chance of preventing a pregnancy
  - If taken between 25-48 hours, there is an 85% chance
  - If taken within 49-72 hours there is a 58% chance

## Instructions: **Ask, Inform, Instruct** and **Provide**

- ◆ **Ask** if the patient is allergic to levonorgestrel, the main hormone in EC.
- ◆ **Inform** the patient:
  - Timing is an essential element of the product's effectiveness. It should be taken as soon as possible after unprotected intercourse.
  - Some women experience side effects similar to regular birth control such as nausea (23% of users), abdominal pain (18%), headache (17%), tiredness (17%).
  - Dizziness and breast tenderness occurs in about 10% of patients, and 5-6% of patients experience either vomiting or diarrhea.
  - Other possible side effects are menstrual changes such as spotting before the next period, or changes in menstrual flow.
  - Although few people experience vomiting with EC, if vomiting occurs within one hour of taking it, EC might not have absorbed and a repeat dosage may be warranted.
  - If the patient's period is more than one week late she should check with a health care provider to see if she is pregnant.
- ◆ **Instruct** the patient on how to properly take the pills.
  - FDA approved labeling states:
    - ◆ EC should be initiated within 72 hours (3 days) of unprotected sex.
    - ◆ Plan B® and Next Choice™: Take one tablet immediately and take the second tablet 12 hours later.
    - ◆ Plan B® One-Step: Take one tablet immediately.
- ◆ **Provide** the patient with instructions and review any questions the patient may have regarding EC.

For more Information:

[www.mynextchoice.com](http://www.mynextchoice.com) or 1-866-992-8766  
[www.planbonestep.com](http://www.planbonestep.com) or 1-800-330-1271

◆ **Professional Conduct**

- Pharmacists and technicians should not interfere with or obstruct a patient’s right to receive timely drug therapy
- Pursuant to R5-19.1 Section 27, verbal abuse and/or other harassment of a patient constitutes unprofessional conduct.
- Pharmacists and technicians shall comply with HIPAA regulations and shall not confiscate or tamper with a patient’s prescription.

<b>Guide for beginning a Family Planning Method after Emergency Contraception</b>			
<b>Method</b>	<b>Regular start</b>	<b>Jump start</b>	<b>Reminders</b>
Oral contraceptives pills (OCPs) (combination or progestin-only)	Use back-up contraception method until next period, then begin OCPs within 5 days of beginning the next menstrual period.	Start a new package of OCPs the day after taking the two EC doses (use back-up contraception method for first seven days).	Pregnancy test if patient does not have normal period after completing first package of OCPs.
Injectable contraceptives	Use back-up contraception method until next period, then start injectable method within 5 days of beginning the next menstrual period.	The day after EC treatment is completed, check a pregnancy test and if negative start injectable method. (use back-up contraception method for first seven days). Check a repeat pregnancy test in 2-3 weeks.	
Implants	Use back up contraception method until next period then initiate within 5 days of beginning the next menstrual period.		
Contraceptive patch	Use back-up contraception method until next period, then begin patch within 5 days of beginning the next menstrual period.	Apply the patch the day after taking the two EC doses (use back-up contraception method for first seven days).	Pregnancy test if patient does not have a normal period after completing a one-month supply.
Intrauterine device (IUD)	Use back-up contraception method until next period, then proceed with IUD insertion.		
Diaphragm	Begin using immediately.		
Condoms	Begin using immediately.		
Spermicides	Begin using immediately.		
Vaginal Ring	Use back up contraceptive method until next period, then start the ring within five days of the next menstrual period. Use back up contraception until the ring has been in place 7 days.	Start the ring the day after taking EC (Use back up contraception method for the first seven days)	Pregnancy test if the patient does not have a normal period.

Pharmacist, provider and patient educational materials are available in downloadable format at [www.womenshealthri.org](http://www.womenshealthri.org)