

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

Emergency Contraception (EC), also known as the Morning After Pill, is used to help prevent pregnancy after having sex without the use of birth control or when a birth control method fails. If you did not use birth control, if you were forced to have sex without protection or if you feel your current method of birth of control may have failed (such as a condom breaking or slipping off or if you forgot to take 2 or more of your birth control pills), emergency contraception can be a simple, safe and effective choice.

Emergency Contraception can safely prevent pregnancy following unprotected intercourse in a number of different ways. There are 3 methods of Emergency Contraception currently available in the United States at this time: 1) combined estrogen and progestin oral contraceptives, 2) progestin-only pill such as Plan B which contains only levonorgestrel, or 3) the copper containing IUD. The most effective method of Emergency Contraception is the placement of an Intra Uterine Device (IUD) into the uterus up to 7 days after unprotected sexual activity.

Emergency Contraception requires one or a combination of several options: 1) taking a set of birth control pills, 2) taking the anti progestins RU486 (Mifeprex) and Ulipristal Acetate, 3) taking Plan B or levonorgestrel, 4) taking anti-inflammatory medications (specifically COX 2 inhibitors) or 5) the placement of an Intrauterine Device (IUD) inside the uterus after unprotected intercourse.

Emergency contraception has been found to effectively reduce the incidence of pregnancy if taken immediately up to 120 hours after unprotected intercourse. Unlike the term Morning After Pill implies, EC can and should be taken as soon as possible. The sooner EC is taken from the time of unprotected intercourse the more effective it is at reducing the incidence of unwanted pregnancy. It can reduce the chance of pregnancy by as much as 95% if taken within 12 hours of unprotected intercourse.

EC works mostly by delaying ovulation. After a 12 hour period of ovulation, the ova begin to age and fertility cannot occur. EC does not prevent implantation of a fertilized egg into the womb. EC interferes with the hormonal patterns necessary for pregnancy to continue. Hormone release from the ovary is reduced, and the development of the uterine lining is disturbed.

EC should not be used if you think you may already be pregnant. Do not use EC without consulting with your physician if you have had a stroke, breast cancer, blood clots in your legs or lungs; any serious medical condition such as high blood pressure or diabetes; liver, heart, or kidney disease; or any reason to think that EC may pose any risk to your health.

The side effects of EC may be nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, delayed period and irregular bleeding. For most people, these symptoms generally last only for a few hours, but for some they may last for a couple of days. Taking EC with food is recommended and anti-nausea medication may be of considerable help.

Emergency Contraception does not cause an abortion. EC is not a substitute for regular, long term birth control because it is actually less effective at preventing pregnancy. A pregnancy test should be performed 10 days after taking the last dose of Emergency Contraception to assure that you are not pregnant.

Emergency Contraception should be kept readily available for anyone who does not want to become pregnant. We offer a variety of Emergency Contraception methods. Please call or visit one of our convenient locations and we will be pleased to discuss all of our Emergency Contraception options with you.