

## Questions and Answers

**Q: Can I use emergency contraception all the time?**

**A:** It should only be used in an emergency. Regular birth control methods all work better.

**Q: What's the difference between EC and the abortion pill?**

**A:** EC doesn't cause abortion. It won't work if a woman is already pregnant. It's used before the egg attaches. It's not the same as mifepristone (a pill used for abortion).

**Q: What if I'm already pregnant? Will it hurt the fetus?**

**A:** Studies have found no increased risk to a fetus from EC pills. There is a risk of miscarriage if an IUD is put in after a pregnancy has started.

**Q: Does EC protect me against STD (sexually transmitted disease) and HIV?**

**A:** No. To protect yourself from STD you need to use a condom every time you have sex.

**Q: How much does it cost?**

**A:** Fees for an IUD range from \$90 to \$500. Pills cost \$25 to \$100. Fees may be covered by health insurance. Many family planning clinics and college health centers offer these services free or at low cost.



### How can I get a supply?

Talk with your provider or pharmacist about getting a supply of EC pills to have in case an emergency happens.

Be sure to get counseling and written instructions. Then you can use the pills without delay.

After sex, you still have up to 5 days to prevent pregnancy.

## Where to Find Out More

- Call your provider, local family planning clinic or Planned Parenthood.
- Call the Emergency Contraception Hotline at 1-888-668-2528. The hotline is available in English and Spanish, 24 hours a day.
- Call or visit your local pharmacy. Some pharmacists provide EC pills directly, without a prescription, if you are 18 or older.
- You also can get information about emergency contraception at this website: [www.not-2-late.com](http://www.not-2-late.com)

County of Riverside  
Family Planning  
Teen Clinics  
1-888-728-1113

This brochure is not intended as a substitute for your health professional's opinion or care.

Series Editor: Barbara A. Cooley, MA, CHES.

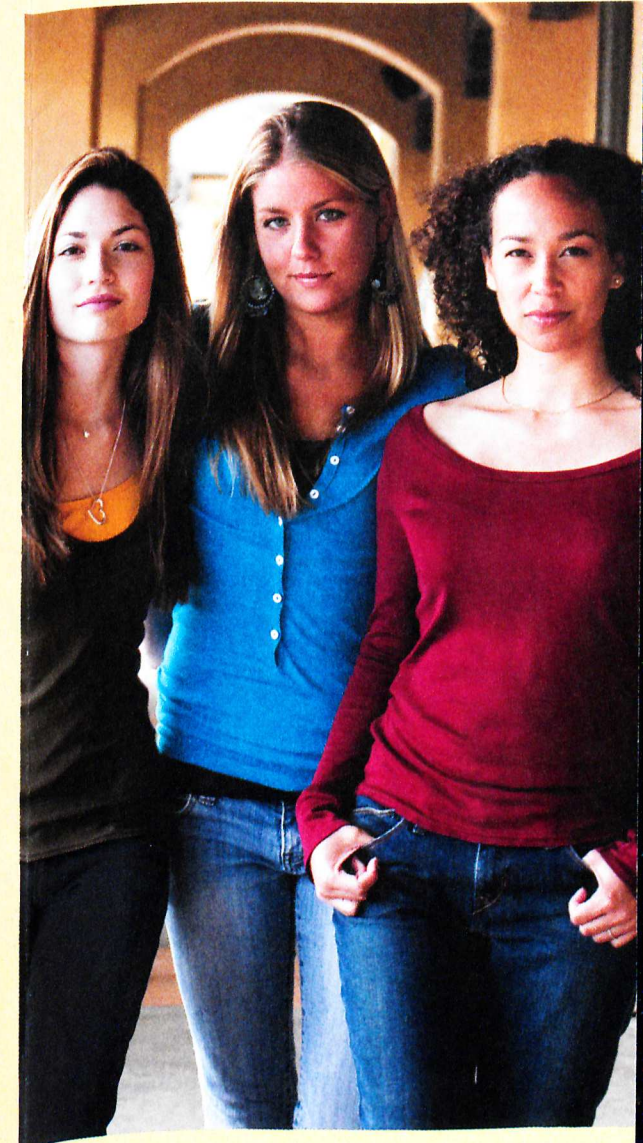
© 1999 ETR Associates. Revised 2007.

All rights reserved. It is a violation of U.S. copyright law to reproduce any portion of this publication.

**ETR** 1-800-321-4407  
Associates [www.etr.org](http://www.etr.org)  
A nonprofit organization

Title No. R019

# Emergency Contraception



## What it is and how to use it



## Worried You Might Be Pregnant?

If you've had unprotected sex within the last 5 days, it's not too late. You can do something to prevent pregnancy.

**Emergency contraception** (EC) is often called the "morning after pill." It works best when started right away, and no later than 5 days after sex.

**Act quickly.** Don't wait. Call your health care provider, pharmacy or clinic to get EC.

## What Is Emergency Contraception?

Just like regular birth control pills, EC can prevent pregnancy in several ways.

It may stop the egg from being released, so sperm can't fertilize the egg. Or, it may change the lining of the uterus so the egg can't attach and grow.

**There are 2 types of EC available in the United States:**

- **Emergency Contraceptive Pills**
- **Copper-T IUD**

There are 2 types of emergency contraceptive pills: progestin pills and combined pills.

A health care provider can give you either kind of pills and explain how to use them.

You can buy progestin pills from a pharmacist without a prescription if you are 18 or older.



"The condom broke!"

"We didn't plan to have sex."

"I missed taking 2 pills this week."

"The patch fell off."

"I was forced to have sex."

"We just didn't use anything."



## Progestin Pills

**Progestin pills contain the hormone progestin.**

- Plan B is a progestin pill made for use as emergency contraception. The chance of pregnancy is less than 1%.
- Plan B provides the doses needed in 2 pills. Take the first pill right after sex or as soon as possible within 5 days. Take the other pill 12 hours later.
- You may also take both pills at once, right after sex or within 5 days. This works the same as taking the pills separately.
- Women who can't take estrogen can take Plan B. Some women may have nausea and vomiting, but it isn't common.

## Combined Pills

**Combined pills contain the hormones estrogen and progestin.**

- Several ordinary brands of birth control pills can be used. Your provider can help you choose. The chance of pregnancy is less than 3%.
- Take 1 dose right after sex or within 5 days. Take another dose 12 hours after the first dose. The number of pills in a dose depends on which pills your provider gives you.
- Even women who can't use birth control pills on a regular basis often can use combined pills safely on a one-time emergency basis.
- Some women may have nausea and vomiting. You can buy medicine at a drugstore to reduce risk of nausea.

## Copper-T IUD

**An IUD must be put in by a health care provider.**

- The IUD must be put in within 5 days after unprotected sex. The chance of pregnancy is less than 1%.
- The IUD can be left in place for up to 12 years as a long-term method of birth control.
- Increased menstrual bleeding, pain and/or cramps may occur at first. You may also have spotting between periods.