

# Facts About Emergency Contraception (EC) or "The Morning After Pill"

## What is Emergency Contraception?

Emergency contraception is birth control for a woman who:

- Had sex without using birth control OR had trouble using her regular method (missed pills, broken condom, overdue for her Depo-Provera shot, diaphragm or cervical cap slipped, miscalculated fertile days, etc.)

**AND**

- Does **NOT** want to get pregnant.

There are two choices for emergency contraception:

- EC pills (ECPs) come in different forms and dosages. These types of EC are sometimes called "the morning after pill."
- A Copper-T Intrauterine Device (IUD) that can continue to be kept in place for long-term contraception.

## When can I use EC?

If:

- You had sex when you didn't plan to
- You didn't use any birth control
- The condom broke or slipped, or came off
- You missed some of your pills
- You are overdue for your shot
- Your partner didn't pull out in time
- Your diaphragm or cervical cap slipped, or came out
- You miscalculated your fertile days
- You had sex against your will

## How well does EC work?

EC is not 100% effective. It works best the sooner you take it. If taken up to 3-5 days after unprotected sex, it can prevent pregnancy about 75-89% of the time. EC should not be used for ongoing birth control.

## EC will:

- NOT protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STI) or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- NOT do any good if you are already pregnant
- NOT hurt you if you are already pregnant

## How does EC Pill work?

ECPs prevent pregnancy in the following ways:

The pill may:

- Keep the body from releasing an egg that could be fertilized by a man's sperm
- Cause changes in the cervical mucus making it more difficult for sperm to enter the uterus
- Keep a fertilized egg from attaching to the uterus
- **If you are already pregnant, EC will not work.**

## **How do I take ECP?**

Take the EC pill or pills within three (72 hours) to five days (120 hours) of having unprotected sex. If a two-step EC, take second dose within 12 hours. If there is only one step dose, only one dose of EC will be taken.

The EC pill does NOT have to be taken in the morning. **Follow the instructions you are given.** A woman can take it any time AND should take it as soon as she can.

## **After taking EC pills, some women:**

- Have nausea with possible vomiting.
- Have stomach pain, sore breasts, headaches, dizziness and tiredness.

Take a single dose of anti-nausea medicine (Dramamine®, Benadryl® or Bonine®) 1 hour before the first dose of EC to help with nausea. If you throw up within two hours of the first or second dose, you will need to repeat the dose.

## **How will I know they worked?**

You should get your period a month (or sooner) after taking EC. **If you do not get your period in a month, take a pregnancy test and talk with your healthcare provider.**

## **What if I want birth control after ECP?**

You can start another method of birth control immediately after taking ECP. Ask your doctor or clinic about starting or continuing a routine birth control method.

You can get ECP at the pharmacy without a prescription or at your county health department family planning clinic or doctor's office.

## **How do I take EC – Copper IUD?**

You can choose to have an emergency insertion of a Copper-T intrauterine device inserted within 5 days after having unprotected sex.

- A doctor or other healthcare provider needs to put in the IUD.
- The IUD stops the sperm from reaching the egg, from fertilizing the egg, and may stop the egg from attaching to the womb.
- The IUD can be used for up to 10 years.

\*Hand this sheet to your pharmacist if you do not receive your ECP at the clinic.\*

**I need Emergency Contraception**