

Get it NOW. Use it later.

Emergency Contraception (EC)

When should I purchase EC and how much does it cost?

Purchase Emergency Contraception (EC) before you need it because it is more effective the sooner it is taken following unprotected sex. It is wise to buy it now and have it on hand in case you suspect that another method of birth control may not have been effective. If you forgot to take your prescription birth control, consult the directions before taking EC. Also, you may encounter problems obtaining EC quickly following unprotected sex, so "Get it NOW – Use It Later." Cost is usually \$40 to \$50 in drugstores, but it may be available for as little as \$10 in family planning clinics, women's health and public health centers. Call 1-800-230-PLAN to find a nearby Planned Parenthood health center.

What is Emergency Contraception and how does it work?

Emergency Contraception (EC) is a safe, effective method to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex. EC contains concentrated dosages of the same hormones found in daily birth control pills. Sometimes referred to as the "morning after pill," EC has been prescribed as an "off-label" use by doctors for many years to prevent pregnancy. Research shows that EC delays or inhibits ovulation (release of the egg into the uterus) and often inhibits fertilization or implantation in the uterus.

Does EC terminate pregnancy?

No, EC only helps to prevent pregnancy from occurring; it will not interrupt or harm an established pregnancy. EC should not be confused with Mifeprex (RU-486) which terminates an early pregnancy.

What kinds of EC are available?

Currently, there is one EC pill available in

the U.S. It is called "Plan B," and is FDA-approved. It is available, usually at the pharmacy (without prescription), to women (and men) ages 18 and over, and by prescription under 18. There are also daily birth control brands that can be used as EC (go to www.not-2-late.com for a complete list). EC is not an adequate replacement for regular birth control or "shield" contraceptives, which should be used on a routine basis.

How do I take Plan B?

A Plan B packet includes two tablets. The first tablet should be taken as soon as possible, preferably within 72 hours of unprotected sex. The second tablet must be taken 12 hours later. New studies show that Plan B can still reduce the risk of pregnancy even after 72 hours – up through 120 hours – but is more effective the sooner it is taken.

How effective is Plan B?

If taken within 24 hours of unprotected sex, Plan B can reduce the risk of pregnancy by 95 percent. If taken within 72 hours, it is approximately 89 percent effective, with a further decline in effectiveness over a five day period.

Where can women get EC?

Every pharmacy should carry Plan B, and even though the product was approved for over-the-counter sale, it may be not stocked on open shelves. You may have to ask for it at the pharmacy counter. Proof of age may be requested. If you find it daunting to ask a pharmacist, please use the card below.

Some states allow pharmacists to refuse to sell or fill prescriptions for contraceptives if they have a religious or personal moral aversion to contraception. If you are refused EC, ask for a referral to another

pharmacist at the same store or to a nearby pharmacy which has EC in stock. Don't be deterred by unkind or intrusive comments by the pharmacist. Also, please collect the information requested on the card below and register it at www.now.org/ec. We would like to document which pharmacies are refusing to prescribe EC, so your information will be useful.

What should I do if I am under age 18 and need EC?

Call your doctor's office immediately and indicate that you are in need of a prescription for EC. The doctor's office may be able to call in a prescription to a pharmacy without having you come in for an office visit. Be sure to have the pharmacy's phone number ready to give to the doctor or nurse. You will want to make sure that the pharmacy will fill prescriptions and has EC in stock. If you don't have a doctor that you regularly visit, then check the yellow pages or the internet for an ob-gyn physician in your area or for a women's clinic or family planning clinic nearby. You can also call 1-888-Not-2-Late for a directory of providers.

If you are refused EC, try to do the following:

- Ask why you are being refused; get the pharmacist's name and other store information.
- Is there another pharmacist here who can sell me EC or fill my prescription?
- If not, ask to be referred to a nearby pharmacy – ask the pharmacist to call and confirm that the 2nd pharmacy will dispense EC.
- Fill out the short questionnaire below and send the information to www.now.org/ec

Cut along dotted line

Hand this card to a pharmacist with your identification.

Thank you for respecting my privacy:

- I would like to purchase emergency contraception.
- I would like to talk to the pharmacist in private.
- I called earlier for emergency contraception and am here to pick it up.

fold here

Did your pharmacist refuse to dispense EC?

Report them to NOW at: www.now.org/ec

Don't forget their information:

Pharmacist name: _____

Store Name: _____

Store Address: _____

Reason for denial: _____

Date: _____

