

# Facts About Emergency Contraception Pills

(levonorgestrel methods)

## Who is Emergency Contraception (EC) for?

EC is for a woman who:

- Had sex without using birth control **OR** had trouble using her regular method (missed pills, broken condom, etc.);

**AND**

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



## What is EC?

EC comes in different forms

- Plan B One-Step EC, and all of its generic forms, is one pill (1.5mg) that contains the same hormone used in many birth control pills (called levonorgestrel). This option is now available over the counter for women and men to purchase and has no age restrictions.
- Ella is one pill that contains a different hormone (called ulipristal acetate). This option requires a prescription.
- There are some other EC options, too.
  - Some types of daily combined birth control pills can be used as EC as directed by a healthcare provider.
  - A Copper-T Intrauterine Device (IUD) inserted by a trained healthcare provider.
  - Go to <https://ec.princeton.edu/> to learn more about these other forms of emergency contraception.

## How does EC work?

- EC works like regular birth control pills. If you are already pregnant, EC will not work.
- **Take EC as soon as possible after having unprotected sex, preferably within 72 hours. EC may still work up to five days (120 hours) after you've had unprotected sex but it may not be as effective. The sooner you take EC, the better it will work.**
- EC does **NOT** have to be taken in the morning. A woman can take it any time **AND** should take it as soon as she can.

EC will:

- **NOT** protect you from sexually transmitted infections or HIV/AIDS.
- **NOT** be effective if you are already pregnant.
- **NOT** cause harm if you are already pregnant.

## How do I take EC?

- Take the EC pill or pills as soon as possible!

## REMEMBER

*EC may still work up to five days (120 hours) after you've had unprotected sex but works better the sooner you take it.*



### Where can I get EC?

- In the US, levonorgestrel-only EC is available over the counter without age restrictions to women and men. Some brands to look for include Plan B One-Step, Take Action, My Way or other generics. To find EC in your area go to [www.bedsider.org/methods/emergency\\_contraception](http://www.bedsider.org/methods/emergency_contraception) under “where to get it” Typically, when you get EC over the counter it isn't covered by insurance. If you get a prescription from a clinician, it is possible that EC will be covered. Each plan is different, so contact your insurance company to find out if, and under what conditions, EC is covered.
- Call your local health department or another local clinic to see if they offer EC.

### After taking EC pills, some women:

- Feel sick to their stomach.
- Feel like throwing up (vomiting).
- Are dizzy or tired.
- Have stomach pain, sore breasts, or headaches.

If you throw up after taking the pills, call your doctor or pharmacist. You should get your period a month (or sooner) after taking EC. **If you don't get your period in a month, take a pregnancy test and talk with your health care provider.**

EC is a good second chance to prevent pregnancy if you had sex without birth control or had problems using your regular method. After you use EC, talk with your health care professional to find the best type of birth control for you to use as a regular method in the future.

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Reference: *Contraceptive Technology 21st ed. 2018. The Emergency Contraception Website operated by The Office of Population Research (OPR) at Princeton University*

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