

# 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 is one pill (1.5mg) that contains the same hormone used in many birth control pills (called levonorgestrel). This option is available without a prescription if you are 17 or older. A prescription is required if you are under 17.
- Next Choice EC are two pills (0.75 mg each) that contains the same hormone used in many birth control pills (called levonorgestrel). This generic option requires a prescription if you are under 17. It is available without a prescription, if you are 17 or older.
- These types of EC are sometimes called "the morning after pill."
- There are some other EC options, too.
  - ◆ Some types of daily combined birth control pills can be used as EC. The number of pills you need to take depends on the type of pill.
  - ◆ A Copper-T Intrauterine Device (IUD).
  - ◆ Go to [www.not-2-late.com](http://www.not-2-late.com) 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. EC may still work up to five days (120 hours) after you've had unprotected sex. 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!

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## 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.*

- If you use the type of EC that has two pills, take them both **at the same time**. The directions on the package of Next Choice may say to take the pills 12 hours apart, BUT
  - ◆ That is harder to do; AND
  - ◆ Good research shows that the pills work just as well if you take them both at the same time.



- To find health care professionals near you who will give you a prescription for EC, go to [www.not-2-late.com](http://www.not-2-late.com).

## Where can I get EC?

If you are 17 or older:

- You can get EC without a prescription from most drugstores. EC is stocked behind the counter, so you will need to ask for it. You may be asked to show proof of your age (ID). **Both women and men can purchase EC.**
- 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.

If you are 16 or younger:

- In most states, you will need a prescription from a health care professional (doctor, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, midwife) to get EC. You then take the prescription to your drugstore to get EC.
- Call your local clinic to see if it has 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.

Adapted from Health Matters, Your Post-Sex Guide to NOT Getting Pregnant, updated August 2009, a publication of ARHP



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