

Emergency Contraception

How:

Emergency Contraceptives (EC) are used to prevent pregnancy after sex if birth control wasn't used or hadn't been used in the right way. They will not work if you are already pregnant. Emergency contraceptives are the copper IUD or pills.

Three types of EC are:

- ella® (may not work well if you weigh more than 193 pounds)
- Plan B One-Step® (may not work well if you weigh more than 154 pounds)
- Paragard® Copper IUD (works the best at any weight)

When:

EC works best if taken as soon as possible after sex. EC works better the sooner you take it but can work up to 5 days (120 hours) after sex. Use backup birth control after taking EC, like condoms, until your next period. If your period is more than one week late, you may be pregnant.

Use EC if:

- You didn't use birth control.
- Your condom broke.
- Your partner did not withdraw or "pull out" on time.
- You missed using or taking your birth control on time.
- You were forced to have sex without birth control.
- Sex "just happened."



Where:

You can get pills at pharmacies. You need to go to a clinic to get the copper IUD. Plan B One-step® is for all ages with no prescription. You need a prescription for ella®. You can also get EC from healthcare providers, family planning clinics and hospital emergency rooms after rape or sexual assault. Call 2-1-1 to find free or low-cost EC and birth control near you.

Advantages:

EC is the only way to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex. It works well as a backup when other methods fail. It is very safe. EC does not cause an abortion. EC does not lower your chance to get pregnant in the future. The copper IUD is the best EC method. You can get it placed up to 5 days after sex and then you have up to 12 years of great birth control.

Disadvantages:

EC pills do not work as well as other birth control methods that you use all the time. If you use EC pills a lot, they are safe to

use, but may cause irregular bleeding. EC does not work if you are already pregnant.

Side effects:

EC may cause nausea, vomiting, dizziness, sore breasts, spotting or abdominal pain. If you vomit within 2 hours after taking EC, call your healthcare provider. You may have to take the pill again. Some women do not feel well for a day or so after taking EC.

Risks:

It does not protect against HIV/STDs.

Effectiveness:

Emergency contraceptive pills or a copper IUD after sex without birth control greatly lower your risk of getting pregnant.