

Plan B Information

Plan B, also known as Emergency Contraception (EC) or the “morning after pill” (MAP), is considered emergency contraception and not intended for frequent use. While Plan B may be appropriate for unprotected intercourse within 5 days, it is more effective if given closest to the time of unprotected intercourse.

Plan B is used to prevent pregnancy through the ingestion of a hormone commonly found in regular oral contraceptive pills (OCPs). As with any form of birth control, Plan B is not perfect. Pregnancy rates have varied in studies from 0-3%. Regular OCPs contain 2 hormones – an estrogen and progesterone. Plan B is simply a progesterone hormone and is a well-known, commonly used medication.

The most common adverse effects for women receiving Plan B included nausea, abdominal pain, fatigue, headache, and menstrual changes. These side effects and risks are described in detail in the Plan B package insert.

If you develop sudden severe headache, chest pain, or abdominal pain, go to the Emergency Room immediately. These serious side effects are very rare.

You may not be a candidate for EC if you are having a migraine, are known or suspected to be pregnant or have unexplained vaginal bleeding.

Rx: Take both pills as soon as possible. If you have experienced nausea or vomiting in the past when taking Plan B or other medications, you make take Plan B in the following way:

Take the first dose of the pill as soon as possible. Take the second and last dose, 1 pill exactly 12 hours later. If you choose this method, try to keep as close to 12 hours as possible because the medication works best this way. You may take this medication with food to prevent nausea.

No form of birth control is perfect. It is known that the unintentional used of OCPs during the early part of a pregnancy is associated with a very low incidence of any problems.

If you do not have a period within three weeks of taking EC, return to the Health Center for a pregnancy test.

Plan B: Important Points to Remember

- Vaginal bleeding WILL happen sometime in the next 3 weeks after you take Plan B. Bleeding may be heavy, light, or stop and restart.
- Your period may be early, late, or mixed up. Don't worry. This is normal after Plan B.

- Bleeding does NOT mean you are not pregnant and does NOT mean you are having a miscarriage. Plan B cannot cause a miscarriage nor hurt you if you are already pregnant.
- If you DO NOT get any vaginal bleeding within 3 weeks after taking Plan B, call the Health Center at 685-2470 for an appointment.

It may be hard to decide if Plan B is right for you. If you feel you need help with this decision you can make an appointment with a clinician. You may decide against it and return to the Health Center for a pregnancy test. If you do become pregnant, we can provide information and referrals about options.

Resources: www.opr.princeton.edu/ec
www.go2.planB.com
www.cecinfo.org

Call 1 888 NOT 2 LATE if you have any questions about Plan B or if you need to hear about EC in Spanish.