

## EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

### What is Emergency Contraception (EC)?

EC can prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex. It is also known as emergency birth control, backup birth control or the morning-after-pill. EC should be used as soon as possible, up to 5 days after unprotected sex.

The type of EC we carry in the health center is **EC Pills**.

- One type of EC pill is made up of ulipristal acetate (UPA). Another type of EC pill is made of one of the hormones-progestin (Progestin EC).

### How Well Does EC Work?

UPA reduces the risk of pregnancy up to 85 percent and works just as well on any day you take it up to 5 days after unprotected sex. But if you are overweight, it may not work as well.

Progestin EC reduces the risk of pregnancy by 75 to 89 percent if you take it within the first 3 days after sex. It is less effective the more time that passes and may not work 4 or 5 days after sex. If you are overweight, it may not work.

### How Does EC Work?

Both types of EC pills work by keeping the ovaries from releasing an egg (ovulation). Pregnancy cannot happen if egg and sperm don't meet.

### When Should I Use EC?

Take it as soon as possible. Use EC every time you have unprotected sex if you are not planning a pregnancy.

You can ask for EC when you need it, or you can get EC pills before. Getting it before will let you take it as soon as possible if you ever need it.

### How Do I Decide Which Type of EC Is Best for Me?

Some things to think about are:

- When you had unprotected sex
  - UPA can work for up to 5 days.
  - Progestin EC will work best in the first 3 days.

### **Continued: How Do I Decide Which Type of EC Is Best for Me?**

- Your BMI:
  - Progestin EC is most effective for people with a Body Mass Index (BMI) that is less than 25.
  - Progestin EC may not work if your BMI is over 30.
  - BMI Calculators are available online at [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) and [NIH.gov](https://www.nih.gov)
    - Example of BMI calculation: Height: 5'4" and Weight 170lbs = BMI of 29.2
- If you are chest feeding:
  - Progestin EC is safe.
  - Use UPA only if you are able to pump and throw away your milk for 36 hours.
- The kind of birth control you use or that you'd like to start. Your healthcare professional can help you decide.

### **What Are the Side Effects of EC Pills?**

Possible side effects go away quickly. They include:

- Dizziness, headaches, breast tenderness
- Nausea
- Belly pain or period cramps
- Bleeding between periods

EC pills can affect your next period. It could be early or late, lighter or heavier, or shorter or longer. Or it could be the same as usual.

EC pills will not end a pregnancy. Don't use it if you are already pregnant. If you're not sure, you may want to have a pregnancy test but even if you are pregnant, or if you become pregnant after taking EC pills, there is no proof that it will harm the pregnancy.

### **What are my other choices?**

Intrauterine Contraceptive (IUC)- A small T-shaped piece of plastic that is put into the uterus. One IUC contains copper (Copper IUC). Another IUC has a hormone like progesterone made by your body (LNG 52mg IUC). Either IUC can also be used for continued birth control.

- The IUC is the most effective method of EC. It reduces the risk of pregnancy by more than 99 percent if it's put in within 5 days of unprotected sex.
- Both IUCs work mainly by affecting the way sperm move so they can't join with an egg.
- The Copper IUC may be left in place to use for birth control for up to 12 years.
- The LNG 52mg IUC may be left in place to use for birth control for up to 7 years.
- Both the Copper IUC and the LNG 52mg are safe during chest feeding.

You can choose to wait and see if you become pregnant. We are happy to discuss all your options with you.

Your health is important to us. If you have any questions or concerns, please call us. #860-685-2470