



## EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

### What is emergency contraception?

Emergency contraception consists of methods that can be used after unprotected sexual intercourse to prevent pregnancy. Emergency contraception is for occasional use; it is not a regular method of birth control. There are two methods of emergency contraception:

- Oral medication, also known as the “morning after pill”, taken within 5 days of unprotected intercourse:
  - Plan B® (levonorgestrel)
  - Ella® (ulipristal acetate)
- Copper-IUD inserted within 7 days of unprotected intercourse

Plan B® (levonorgestrel) and Ella® (ulipristal acetate) are not abortion pills and will have no effect if you are already pregnant.

### Who can use emergency contraception?

Almost everyone can use emergency contraception. Even an individual who cannot use birth control pills containing estrogen can use Plan B® (levonorgestrel) or Ella® (ulipristal acetate) because there is no estrogen in these medications. If you know or suspect, you are pregnant you should not use emergency contraception.

### What is Plan B®(levonorgestrel)?

Plan B® contains the hormone progestin and works by delaying the release of an egg from the ovaries.

You can purchase Plan B® at most pharmacies without a prescription or at the Sexual Health Centre. Plan B® works best when taken as soon as possible after unprotected sexual contact, preferably within three days (72 hours) and has some effectiveness up to five days (120 hours) after unprotected sexual contact. Plan B® may not be as effective in individual with a BMI  $\geq 25$ .

### What is Ella® (ulipristal acetate)?

Ella® is a selective progesterone receptor modulator and acts on the body's hormones to delay the release of an egg from the ovaries.

Ella® is available at most pharmacies, by prescription only. Ella® can be used for emergency contraception up to 5 days after unprotected intercourse. Ella® may not be as effective in individual with a BMI  $\geq 35$ .

## What are the advantages of oral emergency contraception?

- Oral emergency contraception is very safe and can be taken by almost everyone
- Oral emergency contraception will not cause harm if you are already pregnant

## What is a copper IUD?

A copper IUD can be inserted within 7 days of unprotected intercourse. Please see the IUD fact sheet for further information or discuss with your health care provider.

## Remember:

- Notify your health care provider or take a home pregnancy test if you do not get your menstrual period within 21 days of using oral emergency contraception.
- Emergency contraception does not protect against sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBIs), including HIV.
- Oral emergency contraception should only be used as a back-up method of birth control, discuss future contraceptive needs with your health care provider.

For more information on emergency contraception, please consult these sources:

[www.sexandu.ca](http://www.sexandu.ca)

[www.planb.ca](http://www.planb.ca)

[www.ellanow.com](http://www.ellanow.com)

Call the **Sexual Health Infoline Ontario** at 1-800-668-2437 if you have questions or need help.

### **Sexual Health Clinic**

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[OttawaPublicHealth.ca](http://OttawaPublicHealth.ca)