



We offer an emergency contraception pill (ECP) called Plan B. It is a pill that has a high dose of a hormone called *levonorgestrel*.

How does ECP work?

It is unclear exactly how ECP works. It likely delays or stops the release of an egg (ovum). If you are already pregnant, ECP will not end the pregnancy. It is not an abortion pill.

How effective is it?

You can take ECP up to five days after unprotected intercourse or birth control failure (condom broke). The sooner you take it, the better it works. Effectiveness decreases with time.

ECP prevents pregnancy:

- » 95% of the time when taken within 24 hours
- » 85% of the time when taken within 25 - 48 hours
- » 58% of the time when taken within 49 -72 hours

It may be effective up to 5 days (120 hours) after unprotected sex, but the exact percentage of its effectiveness then is unknown.

How do I use ECP?

Your WHC health care provider will discuss your health history with you to see if ECP is right for you. The dose is one pill.

If you feel nauseous, take anti-nausea medicine (like *Gravol*®). You can buy it at a drug store without a prescription.

If you vomit within one hour of taking ECP, you may have to take another dose. Call us at 204-947-1517.

You should get your period within three weeks. **IMPORTANT:** Check with your health care provider to make sure you are not pregnant or to rule out ectopic pregnancy if:

- » you do not get your period within 3 weeks
- » your period is lighter than normal
- » you have abdominal or pelvic pain after using ECP

Emergency contraceptives are not meant to be used for regular birth control because they are less effective than other methods.

What are the advantages?

ECP is a good back-up method if birth control failed or wasn't used. Plan B has fewer side effects than other hormonal emergency contraceptive methods. Studies show that it won't harm the fetus if you are already pregnant.

What are the disadvantages?

It doesn't protect against sexually transmitted infections. People allergic to *levonorgestrel* should not use it.

Are there side effects?

It may cause stomach upset (26%) or vomiting (6%) or other minor side effects. Check the package directions for more information.

What is the cost?

Our birth control supply program is based on donation. Donating what you can afford helps us offer ECP to all who need it. If you can't donate anything, we will give you ECP for free.

Please let your health care provider know if you have a drug plan that covers prescriptions. They will give you a prescription to fill at any drugstore.

Where can I get Plan B?

From Women's Health Clinic, other community health clinics, walk-in clinics and family doctors' offices. You can get it at many drug stores without a prescription, but it's behind the counter so you need to speak to a pharmacist to get it.

For more information, call Health Links at 204-782-8200.

Disclaimer: We provide this health information for your learning only. It should not be used to replace a visit with a health care provider.

Consider:

Are you already pregnant? If your last period was late or unusual for you, take a pregnancy test before taking ECP.

Do you need reliable regular birth control? Do you know about your birth control options? Talk to your WHC health care provider or contact our reception staff to book an information session with a birth control counsellor. Your partner is welcome to attend the info session; knowing how to use a condom correctly decreases the chances of it slipping or breaking.

If your pap test up to date? If you're not sure, talk to your health care provider.

Unprotected sex or condom failure increases your risk for sexually transmitted infections. Talk to your health care provider about STI testing.