

USER GUIDE: EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION PILL (EC PILL)

Remember,
Emergency
Contraception
**does not protect
you from Sexually
Transmitted
Infections or HIV.**
If you are looking
for protection
from STIs and HIV,
both the internal
and external
condoms are
great options!



HOW DO EC PILLS WORK?

- Progestin EC pills (Plan B One-Step®, Next Choice®, and others) contain a hormone, called progestin, similar to one your body makes. Ulipristal acetate (UPA; ella®) mimics and blocks progestin. While you are taking EC pills, they stop your ovaries from releasing eggs. Without an egg, you cannot get pregnant.
- No method of birth control is 100% effective. The sooner you take EC pills, the better they work. They can work up to 5 days (120 hours) after unprotected sex.
- Drug companies aren't good at making sure their medications work for people of all sizes. Progestin EC pills do not work as well if your body mass index is over 25. UPA does not work as well if your body mass index is over 30.
- EC pills don't work to end a pregnancy.

HOW DO I USE EC PILLS?

- Take EC as soon as you can after unprotected sex. If your package has 2 pills, take both pills at the same time.
- You can start or continue hormonal birth control as soon as you've taken progestin EC pills. Wait 5 days after taking UPA before using birth control that has hormones.

WHAT DO PEOPLE LIKE ABOUT EC PILLS?

- EC lowers your chance of getting pregnant after unprotected sex.
- Some people who have sex less frequently prefer a hormonal method that can be used only when needed.

HOW WILL I FEEL AFTER TAKING EC PILLS?

- EC has no long-term or severe side effects.
- You may have nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, breast/chest pain, or belly pain for 1-2 days after taking the pills. To prevent nausea, you can take anti-nausea medicine (such as meclizine) one hour before you take EC pills.
- Your next period may come a few days early or a few days late. You may have spotting.
- You may want to take a pregnancy test 2-3 weeks after you've taken the pills to make sure they worked.

ARE EC PILLS SAFE?

- EC pills are very safe.
- It's safe to breast/chestfeed after taking progestin EC pills. A dose of UPA while breast/chestfeeding is likely safe, however, there is no research that confirms this.

WHERE CAN I GET EC PILLS?

- Available at pharmacies, health centers, or from your clinician. Call ahead to see if your clinician has it.
- Also available through telehealth platforms and vending machines on some college campuses and public places.
- You can get progestin EC without a prescription, no matter how old you are.
- You can only get UPA with a prescription.
- You can have EC on hand in case you need it. Ask for refills on your prescription.

