Emergency Contraception: Which EC is Right for Me?

	IUD	Ulipristal Acetate Pills	Progestin Pills
			
What is it?	Emergency contraception (EC) is birth control you can use after unprotected sex.		
What does it do?	**EC prevents** a pregnancy after unprotected sex. EC does **not** end a pregnancy and will **not** work if you are pregnant.		
Medication	Copper or Levonorgestrel*	Ulipristal acetate (UPA)	Levonorgestrel (LNG)
Brand names	Mirena®, Liletta®, Paragard®	ella®	Plan B® One-Step, Next Choice® and others
How well does it work?	The IUD has very high effectiveness. It lowers your chance of getting pregnant by more than 99%. Your weight does not matter.	The sooner you take it, the better it works. UPA has high to medium effectiveness. It may not work as well if your body mass index (BMI) is over 30.	The sooner you take it, the better it works. Progestin EC has low to medium effectiveness. It may not work as well if your body mass index (BMI) is over 25.
How does it work?	The IUD is a T-shaped plastic rod that stays in your uterus. It prevents sperm from getting to the egg.	UPA mimics and blocks progestin. While taking UPA, it stops your ovaries from releasing eggs.	LNG is a progestin hormone, similar to one your body makes. While taking progestin EC, it stops your ovaries from releasing eggs.
When do you take it?	You can have the IUD inserted up to 5 days after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy. It works as birth control for up to 12 years (Paragard) or 8 years (Liletta/Mirena). You can have the IUD removed any time you want.	UPA can work up to 5 days (120 hours) after unprotected sex. Take it as soon as possible after unprotected sex. Wait 5 days after taking UPA before starting hormonal contraception.	Progestin EC can work up to 5 days (120 hours) after unprotected sex. Take it as soon as possible after unprotected sex. Some packs contain 1 pill, and some packs contain 2 pills. You should take the 2 pills together. You can start or continue hormonal birth control as soon as you've taken progestin EC.

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What happens to your body?	A clinician inserts the IUD into your uterus. You may have cramps and spotting for a few hours.	Most people who take EC pills feel fine. Some people have nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, belly pain, or breast/chest pain for 1-2 days after taking the pills. Your next period may come a few days early or a few days late. You can get pregnant if you have unprotected sex again.	
How much does it cost?	If it's not covered by insurance, the IUD may cost $500 to $1,000. Many insurance plans cover the IUD.	UPA costs about $35-$70 for 1 dose. Many insurance plans cover UPA.	Progestin EC costs about $7-$60 for 1 dose. Many insurance plans cover progestin EC. Although some brands are sold over the counter, you may need a prescription for insurance coverage.
How do you find it?	A clinician must insert the IUD. Call your health center to make an appointment. Say that you need your IUD as soon as possible for emergency contraception.	You can get UPA at pharmacies, health centers, or from your clinician. Call ahead to see if they have it. You need a prescription for UPA.	You can get progestin EC at pharmacies, health centers, telehealth platforms, and even vending machines in schools and other public places. Pharmacies sell progestin EC to people of any age without a prescription.

*There is more evidence of the use of the Paragard Copper IUDs as EC than LNG IUDs (Mirena/Liletta).