



FACT SHEET: Emergency Contraception

A pill or an IUD (intrauterine device) that prevents pregnancy from occurring if taken soon after unprotected sex. It is a back-up method of birth control. Consider using emergency contraception if:

1. You had sex without any kind of birth control
2. You forgot to take or use your regular birth control method (pill, ring, diaphragm, shot, or patch)
3. A condom breaks or leaks during intercourse or failed withdrawal method
4. You were forced to have unprotected sex.

Keep in mind that the emergency contraception pill is only a back-up method.

If you want more reliable birth control, please make an appointment with us to discuss your birth control options.

The emergency contraception pill is different from the abortion pill. It will not cause an abortion after you are pregnant and have a positive pregnancy test. If you have had a positive pregnancy test, consider calling Health Services for an appointment to discuss your options.

What are the two types of emergency contraception?

1. **Pills:** These work by delaying ovulation of an egg.
 - **Levonorgestrel 1.5mg. pill** - AKA *Plan B One-Step, Mychoice, and others.*
 - If taken within 3 days after intercourse, it decreases the chance of pregnancy by 89%.
 - It may not work as well if you weigh more than 165 lbs., or your BMI is 30 or higher.
 - It is available for purchase at the Cal Poly Pharmacy and other drugstores without a prescription.
 - **Ulipristal acetate pill** - AKA *Ella.*
 - If taken up to 5 days after intercourse, it decreases the chance of pregnancy by 85%.
 - It is not affected by your weight.
 - It is available by prescription only after an appointment with a medical provider at Health Services or other providers off-campus.
2. **IUD:** This most likely works by interfering with the egg and sperm function and viability and affecting an embryo's ability to implant in the uterus.
 - **Copper IUD** – AKA *Paragard.*
 - It needs to be inserted within 5 days after intercourse by a medical provider and is almost 100% effective.
 - This choice is available off-campus only.
 - It can continue to work as your long-acting contraceptive for up to 10 years

What are the possible side effects of emergency contraception?

Emergency contraception is safe.

Emergency contraceptive pills and IUDs do not affect your future fertility.

Some people experience nausea, vomiting, headaches, breast pain or mild stomach pain or irregular bleeding for a few days after taking an emergency contraceptive pill. For more information on IUD side effects, please visit the main birth control page.

There can be interactions with certain medications for seizure or infection that make emergency contraception less effective, especially the levonorgestrel. Discuss with your medical provider if you are on any other medications.

How many times per month can I take an emergency contraceptive pill?

There is no limit to how many times you can take it, but you may experience more of the side effects listed. If you have another episode of unprotected sex, taking another emergency contraceptive is necessary as it does not last long in your body. Remember that it is not reliable as a regular form of birth control. Please make an appointment to see what birth control options will work for you.

Is emergency contraception considered to be medication?

Yes. Inform your other health care providers if you have recently taken emergency contraception. They can potentially interact with other medications or supplements.

When should I resume my regular form of birth control?

After taking a levonorgestrel pill (AKA Mychoice or Plan B), you can restart or start birth control pills immediately. You do not have to wait for a period. If you are on the birth control patch, you should start a new patch. If you are on the ring, put it back as soon as possible as if you had a late replacement or removal. Plan to use a backup method such as a condom or abstaining for at least 7 days after starting or restarting your birth control method.

After taking ulipristal (Ella), you can start or restart any combination birth control pill, ring, or patch on the **fifth day** after taking the emergency contraceptive. Plan to use a backup method such as condoms or abstaining from the time you take ulipristal until your next period.

For more information, please ask your medical provider or pharmacist and read the package insert for your birth control