

Emergency Contraception

What is it?

EC is birth control used AFTER intercourse to prevent pregnancy. It can be provided through oral medication (pills) or insertion of an IUD (intrauterine device). Use of EC is a safe and effective way of reducing the risk of pregnancy after unprotected sex (condom failure, missed oral contraceptives (OC), or failure to use a contraceptive method, etc.).

Formerly referred to as the "morning after pill" EC pills are intended as emergency contraception. If you have a need for ongoing contraception please discuss this with a clinician at Health & Wellness.

What types of emergency contraception are available at UNH Health & Wellness Pharmacy?

There are two types of emergency contraception pills that are available through the H&W Pharmacy.

PLAN B One Step and/or the generic version - available without a prescription

- Approved for use up to 5 days after unprotected sex
- Most effective if taken within 24 hours of unprotected sex
- Decreasing effectiveness with time after unprotected sex
- Most effective for women with a BMI of less than 26

ella - available with a prescription

- Approved for use up to 5 days after unprotected sex
- Equally effective for all 5 days
- No loss of effectiveness up to at least a BMI of 30

If you choose ella, you will be asked by Health & Wellness to complete a short questionnaire which will be reviewed by a Health & Wellness clinician. After review, the clinician will determine which EC is appropriate for you or you may be asked to make an appointment if additional information is needed.

What it is not?

It is not the abortion pill (RU486). EC is not effective after pregnancy has occurred and cannot interrupt it.

How it works?

EC pills create a short strong burst of hormones which interfere with the normal hormone patterns of the menstrual cycle. They work by delaying the release of an egg from the ovary. It is also possible that EC interferes with sperm swimming in cervical mucus, disturbs the lining of the uterus to prevent implantation in the uterus, or interfere with the transportation of the egg or sperm through the fallopian tubes.

Risk of Pregnancy?

The risk of becoming pregnant with any single act of intercourse can be as high as 30%. Pregnancy rates are less than 4% after use of emergency contraception. With levonorgestrel (e.g. Plan B), if it turns out you are already pregnant, there is no effect on the pregnancy. Ella's effect on pregnancy has not been tested. If there is any chance you might be pregnant, don't take ella. Using EC will not affect a woman's ability to become pregnant in the future.

Are there Contraindications?

There are very few contraindications to using EC. These contraindications include existing pregnancy, undiagnosed vaginal bleeding, or allergy to the ingredients of the pills.

How is it used?

One tablet of EC is taken within 120 hours of unprotected sex. Plan B is most effective if it is taken within 24 hours of unprotected sex. Ella's effectiveness remains constant for all 5 days after unprotected sex.

What are the common side effects?

Common side effects that will subside within a few days can include: Headache, fluid retention, breast tenderness, irregular bleeding, nausea, mild abdominal pain.

Menstrual changes may occur during the cycle in which EC is used. These include spotting and/or a period may be earlier or later than expected.

CONTACT HEALTH & WELLNESS OR YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER IF YOU:

1. Vomit within 2 hours of taking your dose of EC (this is very unlikely). This dose must be repeated. There is medication available to help prevent vomiting.
2. Do not start menses within three weeks of taking EC.
3. Have a **very** unusual period.

EC is intended as emergency contraception. If you have a need for ongoing contraception please discuss this with your medical provider. UNH Health & Wellness provides annual women's health exams, pap smears, unlimited office visits (covered by your health fee). Contraceptive methods are available.

It may be helpful to have a dose of EC on hand. Your medical provider or pharmacist can provide EC before it is needed.

*Please come at least 30 minutes prior to Health & Wellness closing time to allow for consultation.

How to get support and help if sex was not consensual:

UNH SHARPP has a 24/7 helpline (603) 862-7233(SAFE), UNH Health & Wellness medical care.

If you ARE NOT a UNH community member, the following resources are available:

Domestic violence /relationship violence support (866) 644-3574. Sexual Assault Support (800) 277-5570



Health & Wellness

603-862-9355 • unh.edu/health • @UNHHealth

Accredited by



ACCREDITATION ASSOCIATION
for AMBULATORY HEALTH CARE, INC.

© UNH Health & Wellness, 4/18