

About Emergency Contraceptive Pills

You can use Emergency Contraceptive pills (EC pills) if you had sex without using a birth control method, or if your birth control method failed.

There are two types of EC pills—pills especially made for EC or regular birth control pills you can take in special doses.

Family PACT
Planning • Access • Care • Treatment
OFFICE OF FAMILY PLANNING
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
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When should I use EC pills?

You need to use EC pills right away, if you had sex without protection. For example:

- ◆ You weren't using any birth control method.
- ◆ The condom broke or slipped off.
- ◆ You forgot to take your birth control pills two days in a row.
- ◆ Your diaphragm slipped out of place.
- ◆ You were forced to have sex.

EC pills should *not* be used as a regular birth control method. EC pills should be used only in an emergency.

What do EC pills do?

EC pills lower the chances you will get pregnant *after* unprotected sex.

EC pills work best if you take them within 12 hours. But you must take them no later than 5 days after sex. They do not work for sex that happens after you take them.

How do EC pills work?

EC pills help:

- ◆ Stop the egg from leaving your ovaries.
- ◆ Stop sperm from getting to the egg.
- ◆ Keep the egg from attaching to the uterus.

EC pills will not stop a pregnancy that has already started. It is not the abortion pill.



We called Family PACT right away and found out how to get EC pills.

Where can I get EC pills?

Many health care providers, pharmacies, and family planning clinics have EC pills. You may be able to get EC pills at no cost. Find a Family PACT provider near you. Call 1-800-942-1054. Or go online at www.familypact.org.

What do some women like about EC pills?

- ◆ EC pills are safe.
- ◆ EC pills are a good backup if your birth control method fails.
- ◆ EC pills are easy to use.

What do some women dislike?

- ◆ You may feel sick to your stomach.
- ◆ You may need a prescription.

How do I use EC Pills?

Your health care provider or pharmacist will tell you how many and what type of pills to take.

- ◆ Your provider may give you Plan B, which is 2 pills made especially for emergency contraception.
- ◆ Or your provider may tell you how to take regular birth control pills in 2 special doses.

Some health care providers may tell you to take both doses at the same time. Others may tell you to take each dose 12 hours apart.

The main thing to remember is:

- ◆ Take EC as soon after the unprotected sex as you can.
- ◆ It works best the sooner you take it.

Some women may get an upset stomach. Your health care provider may order a medicine to keep you from feeling sick to your stomach. Dramamine® or some other over-the-counter product may also help.

Call your provider if you vomit within an hour after you took the first dose. You may need to take the next dose right away.

Don't worry if you vomit the second dose. By the time you vomit, enough of the dose you need is already in your body. Do not take extra pills.

After you take EC Pills — what you need to know:

- ◆ Do not have unprotected sex.
- ◆ Use condoms or another birth control method when you have sex.
- ◆ If you have no birth control method, talk to a Family PACT provider about starting one.
- ◆ Tell your provider you took EC pills.
- ◆ If you do not get your period within three weeks, call your Family PACT provider to set up a visit.



Plan B is one form of EC pills.

What about the side effects of EC?

You may have these side effects when you use EC pills:

- ◆ You may feel sick to your stomach or vomit.
- ◆ You may have headaches or feel dizzy.
- ◆ Your breasts may feel tender.
- ◆ Your next period may come early or late, or you may spot between periods, or have changes in how much or how long your period is.

Most women can use EC safely.

EC pills have *not* been shown to cause any health problems.

- ◆ You can use it even if you have a history of blood clots.
- ◆ You can use it even if you are breastfeeding.
- ◆ EC pills will not harm you or your baby if you are pregnant.

If you know you are already pregnant, do not use EC pills. EC pills will not work.

EC pills do not protect you from HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) or other diseases people get from having sex.

If you had sex with no protection, get a check-up for these diseases.