

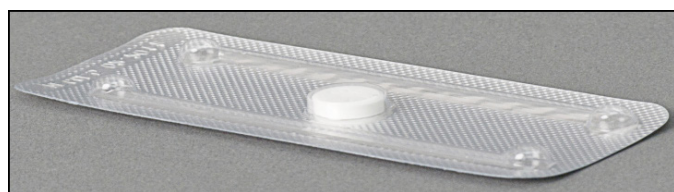
Fact Sheet - English

THE EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE PILL (ECP)



What Is The Emergency Contraceptive Pill?

The emergency contraceptive pill or ECP (sometimes wrongly called the 'morning after pill') is a single dose of a hormone called levonorgestrel (also used in some contraceptive pills). You can take it to reduce the chance of getting pregnant after having unprotected sex, for example, if you did not use any contraception, if you missed your usual contraceptive pill, or you used a condom that broke during sex.



How Does It Work?

The emergency pill can prevent or delay the release of an egg from a woman's ovaries. If you use the emergency pill, you should keep on using other contraception, e.g. the Pill or condoms or you could still become pregnant. The emergency pill does not interrupt an established pregnancy, or harm a developing embryo or fetus if it is accidentally taken early in pregnancy.

Are There Any Side Effects?

You might have some vaginal bleeding a few days after using the emergency pill.

The emergency pill is very safe to use with no serious or long-lasting side-effects. Some women have experienced an irregular period after taking the emergency pill and a few may have nausea or breast tenderness. If you have vomiting less than two hours after you take a dose of emergency contraception you should take another dose.

How Effective Is it?

The emergency pill is most effective when taken in the first 24 hours after unprotected sex. If taken within three days of unprotected intercourse the emergency pill will prevent approximately 85% of expected pregnancies. You may need to have a follow-up pregnancy test to make sure you are not pregnant, in a few weeks.

How Do You Take It?

Emergency contraception is more effective the sooner you take it after unprotected sex. It is most effective if taken within 24 hours of unprotected sex. However it can still be used up to 120 hours (five days). It is safe to use the emergency pill more than once in a cycle.

When Should You Get Your Next Period?

Most women have a period at about the expected time.

What If Your Period Is Late?

If your period is more than a week late, you should do a pregnancy test and contact your doctor or Talkline for advice.

Where Can I Get The Emergency Pill?

You can get the emergency contraceptive pill from pharmacies without a doctor's prescription. It costs about \$20-\$30. The pharmacist may ask you a few questions to be sure that it is safe for you to take this medication. It is also available from Family Planning NSW clinics.

For Further Information

- Contact the Family Planning NSW Talkline on 1300 658 886 or go to www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline
- NRS (for deaf) 133 677
- Or visit your nearest Family Planning clinic

Reviewed: June 2014 | FPNSW 06/14

The information in this Factsheet has been provided for educational purposes only. Family Planning NSW has taken every care to ensure that the information is accurate and up-to-date at the time of publication. Individuals concerned about any personal reproductive or sexual health issue are encouraged to seek advice and assistance from their health care provider or visit an Family Planning NSW clinic.

www.fpnsw.org.au | [talkline 1300 658 886](tel:1300658886) | [bookshop](#)

clinical services & information | education & training | research | international development

Family Planning NSW is a not-for-profit organisation funded by the NSW Ministry of Health

The information in this Fact Sheet has been provided for educational purposes only. FPNPNSW has taken every care to ensure that the information is accurate and up-to-date at the time of publication. Individuals concerned about any personal reproductive or sexual health issue are encouraged to seek advice and assistance from their health care provider or visit a Family Planning Clinic. Reviewed May 2014/FPNSW 05/14