



Family Planning *is for* You Your time. Your choice.

Emergency Contraception for Preventing Pregnancy

What You Need to Know

What is emergency contraception?

Emergency contraception (EC) is a form of birth control – a way to prevent pregnancy. Emergency contraception is recommended when birth control, such as a condom, was not used or may have failed.

It can be used after sex where both partners agreed to have sex (consensual sex) – or after sex where both partners did not agree to have sex (nonconsensual sex).

Emergency contraception may be used within 5 days of when sex took place. It does not work if pregnancy has already occurred. Emergency contraception does not end a pregnancy.

- There are 2 types of emergency contraception: intrauterine devices (IUDs) and emergency contraception pills.
- There are 3 types of emergency contraception pills: ulipristal, progestin-only pills, and combined emergency contraception pills.

- An intrauterine device inserted up to 5 days after unprotected sex can provide additional years of highly effective contraception. There are 2 types of IUD. The 52mg LNG IUD offers up to 7 more years of contraception. The copper IUD offers up to 12 more years.
- The sooner emergency contraception pills are taken, the more likely they are to work. Over-the-counter emergency contraception pills should be taken within 3 days of when you had unprotected sex. Prescription pills can be taken within 5 days after you had unprotected sex.

For more information on each type of emergency contraception, see resources in English and Spanish. These are from the Reproductive Health National Training Center.

English



Spanish



What are the side effects?

The side effects of emergency contraception pills can include:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Tender breasts
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Abdominal pains/cramps

The side effects of intrauterine devices can include:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Ovarian cysts
- Pelvic Inflammation
- Tender breasts
- Frequent urination
- Abdominal pains/cramps (may be worse with a copper intrauterine device)

To reduce nausea after taking an emergency contraception pill, you may want to take a

nonprescription anti-nausea medication one hour before the pill. One example is meclizine – sold under the brand names Dramamine II or Bonine. You may take Tylenol (acetaminophen), Aspirin, or Advil (ibuprofen) before your intrauterine device is inserted to reduce cramping and pain. Any side effects usually go away within a few days. Emergency contraception may affect your menstrual cycle (period). It may be early or late, light, or heavy.

What do I do after I take emergency contraception?

Your chances of pregnancy may be greatly reduced if you take emergency contraception. However, you may want to take an at-home pregnancy test in about 2 weeks. If you do not get your next period at all, you should visit your doctor.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will emergency contraception affect my chances for getting pregnant in the future?

No, emergency contraception does not affect future fertility or any future chances to get pregnant.

Do I still need to use some form of birth control even though I can get emergency contraception?

The best way to prevent unwanted pregnancy is to use a regular method of birth control. Emergency contraception is meant for emergency situations.

Where can I go to talk to someone or to get more information?

Contact your health care provider to talk about your options for birth control. If you do not have a provider, there is at least one Family Planning Program clinic in almost every county. They offer specially trained medical professionals who can assist you. To find a health care provider in your area, go to:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/familyplanning>



Should I take emergency contraception after a sexual assault?

It is important to seek health care after a sexual assault. If you are in a hospital, they will talk with you about your options and give you emergency contraception for free. You can also choose to get care from your primary care provider or a family planning clinic. There are resources available to help, such as the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. For more information, contact the NYS Sexual & Domestic Violence Hotline.

Call: 1-800-942-6906 Text: 1-844-997-2121

Call or text any time, available 24/7.

Your call is completely free and confidential.

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For more information, go to <https://opa.hhs.gov>

