

WHAT EVERY ADVOCATE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT Emergency Contraception

Emergency Contraception—“EC” for short—is also known as the “morning-after pill.” Emergency Contraception is a high dose of regular birth control pills that a woman can take to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex. Emergency Contraception pills are effective up to 5 days after unprotected sex, but the sooner the better.

EC can prevent pregnancy after unprotected sexual intercourse if:

- The condom broke or slipped off
- The couple didn't use birth control
- A woman was forced to have sex

Emergency Contraception prevents pregnancy by stopping an egg from being released or preventing an egg from being fertilized. Theoretically, Emergency Contraception could also prevent implantation, but that has not been proven scientifically. It does not interfere with an existing pregnancy. When taken within 3 days of unprotected sex, Emergency Contraception can reduce the risk of pregnancy by 75-89%.

Emergency Contraception pills are NOT the same as the abortion pill. If a woman is already pregnant, this medication will not end or harm her pregnancy. Emergency Contraception does not affect a woman's ability to get pregnant in the future.

Emergency Contraception in New York

The office of the New York State Comptroller estimates that approximately 58% of all pregnancies are unintended in the state of New York. Widespread use and availability of Emergency Contraception could prevent more than half of all unintended pregnancies in New York.

To that end, Planned Parenthood of New York City supports two bills before the New York State legislature that would increase awareness of and access to Emergency Contraception. The “**Public University Emergency Contraception Act**” would require each college and university of the SUNY and CUNY systems to disseminate informational

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BREAKING NEWS!
Emergency Contraception
approved for over-the-
counter access!
(see page 4)



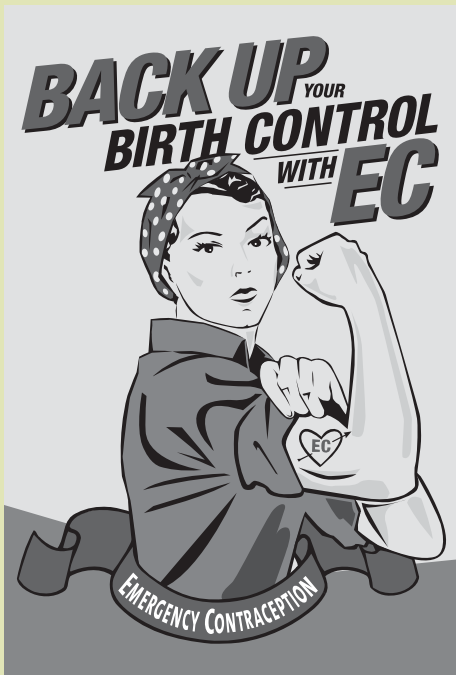
“Emergency Contraception is our back-up. We know accidents can happen.”

Emergency Contraception can prevent pregnancy up to five days after unprotected sex.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD
1-800-230-PLAN www.ppnyc.org

Planning is Power.

TODAY there are more methods of effective birth control than ever before. From condoms to the pill, the patch to the shot, many birth control methods are more than 98% effective. But accidents happen, and it's best to be prepared. Planned Parenthood encourages all women to keep Emergency Contraception in the medicine cabinet, just in case.



Back Up Your Birth Control Campaign

In 2002, a coalition of medical groups and women's health advocates started a campaign to put Emergency Contraception into women's hands before they need it. The Back Up Your Birth Control Campaign urges women to get Emergency Contraception pills to keep in their medicine cabinet – just in case. Women are more likely to use Emergency Contraception if they have it readily available. And studies show that being prepared does not make a woman more likely to use this method repeatedly or to change how she uses her regular birth control method.

Advance prescriptions are currently available from many health care providers, including those at Planned Parenthood. Plan B (a brand of Emergency Contraception) will soon be available from a pharmacist without a prescription for women 18 and older. For more information about the campaign, visit www.backupyourbirthcontrol.org. To make an appointment at Planned Parenthood, call us at (800) 230-PLAN.

materials in clear and concise language to all enrolled students regarding Emergency Contraception. The Act would also require such colleges and universities to provide Emergency Contraception to students who request it from their campus health center.

The “**Unintended Pregnancy Prevention Act**” would increase access to Emergency Contraception by allowing women to get Emergency Contraception directly from registered nurses and pharmacists licensed by the State of New York without first getting a prescription. The bill passed the NYS Assembly and Senate in 2005, but was vetoed by Governor Pataki. Planned Parenthood of New York City will advocate for the bill in the 2006 session. For more information, about both of these bills, visit www.ppnyc.org.

Pharmacist Refusals on the Rise Nationwide

An increasing number of pharmacists are refusing to dispense birth control, including Emergency Contraception. These health care professionals cite their religious, moral, ideological, and personal objections to the use of contraceptives. Planned Parenthood believes that denying women their right to timely access to health care is an act of discrimination that could lead to an increased number of unintended pregnancies.

Refusal is becoming a matter of state policy. An increasing number of states now have pharmacist refusal statutes written into their state law, and federal legislation is being proposed to expand this. As a counter measure, Senator Frank Lautenberg (NJ) and Representatives Carolyn Maloney (NY) and Joseph Crowley (NY) introduced the “Access to Legal Pharmaceuticals Act (ALPHA).” Senator Barbara Boxer (CA) introduced the “Pharmacy Consumer Protection Act of 2005” and Representative Carolyn McCarthy (NY) has also introduced a similar bill. These bills would all require pharmacies to guarantee that all valid prescriptions are filled without delay or other interference.

What Does Access Look Like in Your Community?

- Does your doctor or health center write prescriptions for Emergency Contraception?
- Does your health insurance cover Emergency Contraception?
- Does your pharmacy carry Emergency Contraception (Plan B is the brand name)?
- Does your pharmacy have a written policy that all prescriptions must be filled in-store and without delay?

E-mail Planned Parenthood at choicevoice@ppnyc.org to report your results, and find out how you can take action.



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE

between
 “the morning-after pill”
 and “the abortion pill” ?

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AT PLANNED PARENTHOOD,

we know that there are a lot of misconceptions about Emergency Contraception – what it is, how it works, and where to get it. We have developed a range of educational materials in English and Spanish that give all the facts. To request free copies of Planned Parenthood palmcards, postcards, or posters for yourself, your organization, or your school, please contact us at choicevoice@ppnyc.org.

“the morning-after pill” EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

“the abortion pill” MIFEPRISTONE

WHAT DOES IT DO?

Prevents a pregnancy from occurring after unprotected sex.

Ends a pregnancy without surgery.

WHAT IS IT?

A high dose of birth control pills.

One of two pills used to end a pregnancy without surgery.

WHEN CAN I TAKE IT?

Effective within 5 days of unprotected sex, but the sooner the better.

Effective to terminate pregnancies up to 8 weeks duration.

IS IT SAFE?

Yes. Approved by the FDA as a safe & effective contraceptive for **pregnancy prevention** after unprotected sex.

Yes. Approved by the FDA as safe and effective for **pregnancy termination**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION or to make a confidential appointment at one of our health centers in Manhattan, the Bronx or Brooklyn, please call 212-965-7000 or 1-800-230-PLAN.

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 1-800-230-PLAN www.ppnyc.org

Finally Emergency Contraception Will Be Available Over the Counter!

On Valentine's Day, 2001, the Center for Reproductive Rights, on behalf of more than 70 medical and public health organizations, petitioned the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to make Emergency Contraception available without a prescription. No decision was rendered for this petition, and the makers of the Emergency Contraception pill "Plan B" filed a second petition in 2003.

Two FDA panels of medical experts voted 23 to 4 in favor of making Plan B available without a prescription. Nearly all major medical and health care organizations concurred that Plan B should be available over the counter. But Steven Galson, acting director of the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, overruled the panel's vote, attributing his decision to concerns about adolescent use. On May 6, 2004, under the helm of FDA Acting Commissioner Lester Crawford, the FDA notified the makers of Plan B that its application for over-the-counter status had been denied. Two weeks later, 48 members of Congress requested a Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigation into the FDA's handling of the Plan B application.

In November 2005, the GAO issued its report, calling the handling of the application by the FDA "unusual." The GAO found that the high-level involvement of top FDA officials was atypical, that the decision not to approve the application may have been made before the review was even completed, that Plan B was the only application in the last 10 years that did not receive approval according to the FDA's advisory panels' recommendations, that the rationale for not approving the application was novel, and that no other FDA-approved contraceptive has age-related marketing restrictions.

On August 24, 2006, the FDA approved Plan B for over-the-counter access for women 18 and older. The makers of Plan B expect it to be available in drugstores by the end of 2006. Women younger than 18 will still need a prescription.

How Can I Talk about Emergency Contraception?

People have a lot of misconceptions about Emergency Contraception. Using these key points will help clarify what Emergency Contraception is, and what it is not.

- Emergency Contraception works up to 5 days after unprotected sex, but it's more effective the sooner you take it.
- Emergency Contraception is different from the "Abortion Pill." Emergency Contraception prevents a pregnancy. The "Abortion Pill" ends a pregnancy.
- Emergency Contraception is just a higher dose of regular birth control pills and works the same way the Pill does.
- The more people know about Emergency Contraception, the fewer unintended pregnancies there will be. Even if people disagree about abortion, we can all work together to prevent unintended pregnancies.

What Can I Do to Help?

1. Tell your elected officials that you support increased access to Emergency Contraception. Write a letter to your representatives in Albany asking them to support the "Public University Emergency Contraception Act" or visit www.ppnyc.org to send an easy electronic message.
2. Don't keep it a secret! Tell your family and friends the facts about Emergency Contraception. Planned Parenthood can provide you with helpful postcards, wallet cards, and fact sheets. E-mail choicevoice@ppnyc.org to request materials.
3. Check to make sure your own pharmacy carries Emergency Contraception, and leave educational materials with the pharmacist if they don't. Visit www.backupyourbirthcontrol.org to download a fact sheet for pharmacists.
4. Planned Parenthood encourages all women to get an advance prescription for Emergency Contraception to keep in the medicine cabinet—just in case. To get a prescription, women can ask their health care provider, call Planned Parenthood (800-230-PLAN) or visit www.not-2-late.com for a local provider. By the end of 2006, EC should be available from your pharmacist without a prescription for women 18 and older. Women younger than 18 will still need a prescription.