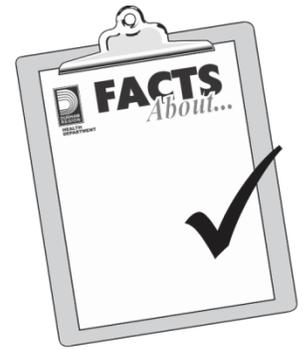




FACTS

About...



HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP)

What is it?

The emergency contraceptive pill (ECP) (such as Plan B) is used to prevent pregnancy. ECP is also known as the “morning after pill”. It is most effective if used within three days (72 hours) after unprotected sex. Unprotected sex may include forgetting to take your birth control pill, a birth control patch or ring removed too early or put on too late, not using birth control at all, condom breakage or leakage, or for a victim of sexual assault.

How does it work?

ECP works to stop the ovaries from releasing an egg and may stop the sperm and egg from meeting. It will not work and should not be taken if you are already pregnant, or if you think you are. ECP is not an abortion pill and will not harm a pregnancy.

How effective is it?

It is hard to determine exactly how effective ECP is because there are many factors that can change the baseline risk of becoming pregnant. However, it lowers the chance of becoming pregnant by at least 50%. The sooner ECP is taken, the more effective it is. ECP should be taken within 72 hours but is less effective the longer you wait. Talk with your health care provider about other emergency contraceptive methods if you weigh over 165 pounds (75kg).

What are the side effects of this method?

ECP can sometimes cause nausea, vomiting, fatigue, breast tenderness, headache, abdominal pain and diarrhea. ECP can also cause changes to your next menstrual period.

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For more information

Durham Region Health Department

905-666-6241 1-800-841-2729 durham.ca

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



What are the benefits?

You can buy ECP without a prescription.

What are the limitations?

ECP is meant for single use and emergency protection only. ECP is not meant to be used as a regular method of birth control.

What are the effects on breastfeeding?

- ECP is safe to use when breastfeeding as only a small amount of the Plan B drug enters the breastmilk.
- If you are currently breastfeeding and use ECP you should follow up with your health care provider to discuss your contraception options.

You should know...

- Take ECP as soon as possible and not more than 120 hours after unprotected sex or a birth control method failure.
- Women who weigh 165 pounds or more should ask a health care provider for advice on other methods of emergency contraception.
- If you vomit within two hours of taking ECP, contact your health care provider. You will need to take another dose.
- If your period is late more than one week from when it was due, you should take a pregnancy test.
- ECP does not protect against HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Always use a condom and have regular STI testing.

November 7, 2019

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