

Effectiveness

- If you take EC right after having unprotected sex, it can reduce your chance of pregnancy by 95%.
- The effectiveness goes down the longer you wait, but it is still worth it to take EC within 5 days of unprotected sex. EC can give you a second chance!
- EC is less effective than a **regular** birth control method like the pill, the shot or condoms.
- EC does not protect you from HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STDs). You need to use a condom if you think you need protection.

FACT: EC is most effective if you take it within the first 24 hours after unprotected sex.

Tell Your Friends!

EC is the only way to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex, or after rape. Too many women still do not know about EC. So, spread the word and **tell your friends.**

Sometimes women feel bad about needing EC. It's important to let your friends know that lots of women need EC from time to time. After all, accidents happen to everyone. No one should ever feel bad about needing EC.

Common Questions

How many times can I use EC?

You can use EC as often as you need. It will be just as effective no matter how many times you use it. But EC is not as effective as a **regular** method of birth control. If you find that you need to use EC a lot and you want something more effective, your clinic or provider can help you find a birth control method that will work better for you.

When can I start using regular birth control?

Right away! You can start using regular birth control methods like the pill, the shot or condoms the same day that you start EC.

What happens if EC doesn't work and I become pregnant? Could it hurt the fetus?

EC won't hurt you or your pregnancy. EC is not an abortion pill and it does not cause birth defects. Taking EC does not hurt your chances of getting pregnant in the future.

Is there a way to keep EC at home, just in case I need it?

Yes! Every woman should have EC pills on hand, just in case. Ask your Public Health clinic or pharmacist for a supply to keep at home

FACT: Millions of women will need EC at some point in their lives.

To learn more about other birth control methods:

Check out our brochures on:

The Pill
Depo Provera ("The Shot")
Condoms
IUD
The Patch
The Ring
Sterilization

Visit our website at:

www.kingcounty.gov/health/famplan

To find a Family Planning Provider near you:

Call the Family Planning Hotline
1-800-770-4334 **OR** TTY 1-800-848-5429
For confidential information and referrals

To prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex, or after your birth control method fails:

Visit the Emergency Contraception website:
www.not-2-late.com to find a clinic or pharmacy near you.

Public Health
Seattle & King County



This brochure was funded in part by US Department of Health and Human Services Grant #2 FPHPA 100029-14-00

12/2008
450-0522

when you
choose

ec

What is it?

EC is also known as Plan B, the morning after pill, and emergency contraception pills. It prevents pregnancy **after** you have had unprotected sex. You have up to 5 days after sex to take EC.

How EC Works

EC works the same way as regular birth control pills. It is made of a hormone that stops a woman's ovary from releasing an egg. Just like birth control pills, EC prevents pregnancy. EC is not an abortion pill.

“My boyfriend didn’t pull out in time. I heard about EC from a friend. I called the clinic and they were able to see me the same day. It was a huge relief to get it, because I wasn’t ready to be pregnant again.”

**— Dawnelle,
age 26, bank teller,
mother of two**

FACT: Every woman should have EC on hand.

How to Get EC

It's important to get EC **as soon as possible** after having unprotected sex! Here are some ways you can get it:

- Call or walk into any Public Health clinic for an appointment. To find a Public Health clinic in King County, visit www.kingcounty.gov/health/famplan
- Buy EC at a drugstore.
 - » If you're 18 or over, male or female, you can buy EC from a drugstore. Ask for it at the pharmacy counter and bring your ID.
 - » If you're a woman 17 or under, go to the EC website, www.not-2-late.com, for pharmacies who can sell EC to you. Be sure to call the pharmacy to double-check before you go.

Here are some things to keep in mind when you get EC:

- Tell the clinic or pharmacy you need Plan B.
- Know the date of your last period started. Also the date(s) that you had unprotected sex.
- You do not need a physical exam to get EC!

Your Personal Back Up Plan

It's a good idea for everyone to have EC on hand. You can use EC if you had sex without birth control or you were forced to have sex. EC is also for women who have had a birth control accident.

- Your partner didn't **pull out** in time
- **Condom:** broke, slipped off or stayed in your vagina when he came out
- **Pill:** missed 2 or more pills
- **Mini pill:** 8 or more hours late
- **Shot:** more than 2 weeks late
- **Patch:** partly or completely off for 24 hours or more, OR left on more than 2 days after it should have been changed
- **Ring:** out for over 3 hours, OR in for more than 5 weeks
- **IUD:** came out or you think it is coming out

How to Use EC

- Take EC as soon as you have unprotected sex. It must be taken within **5 days** after having unprotected sex, but the **sooner** the better.
- Take both pills at the same time. **This is different than the instructions on the package.** It is perfectly safe and often more effective.

If you do not get your period within 3 weeks after taking EC, or if your period is very light, call the clinic or take a pregnancy test!

What to Expect: Common Side Effects

EC is very safe. The most common side effect is feeling sick to your stomach. This lasts under a day and doesn't happen to most women. Some other side effects are:

- Breast tenderness
- Your period coming earlier or later than usual
- Your period being lighter or heavier than usual

FACT: You can use EC whenever you need it. It's very safe.

How To Avoid Feeling Sick to Your Stomach!

- Try to eat some food, like bread or crackers, about 30 minutes before taking your EC.
- Try taking Dramamine or Benadryl at the same time you take EC. Dramamine or Benadryl can make you sleepy, so don't drive right away!

TIP: If you throw up within a half hour of taking EC, or you see little bits of the pills when you throw up, you will need to take EC again.