

ECP OR EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE PILLS

Effectiveness (chance of NOT getting pregnant) 74 % - 89%

What is the ECP or Emergency Contraceptive Pills?

- An emergency contraceptive method used after sexual intercourse to prevent pregnancy.
- Is most effective when used within 12 hours of unprotected intercourse or contraceptive accident.
- ECP can be used up to 72 hours or three days after unprotected sex.
- ECP only works if a woman is not already pregnant.
- Interferes with egg development.
- Prevents or delays ovulation.
- Inhibits fertilization.

Advantages of ECP or Emergency Contraceptive Pills

- Only method of contraception used to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex.
- Only method used to prevent pregnancy after male condom slipped, broke, or leaked.
- Only method used to prevent pregnancy after a woman's diaphragm or cervical cap was inserted incorrectly, removed too early, or found to be torn.
- Only method used to prevent pregnancy after a woman has missed one or more of oral contraceptives.
- Only method used to prevent pregnancy when a female condom was inserted or removed incorrectly.
- Method may be obtained ahead of time from a family planning clinician to be used when needed. Plan B, a brand name for ECP, is also available at a pharmacy. Women and men who are 18 or older can now purchase Plan B over the counter with proof of age. In most states, including Pennsylvania, women 17 or under will still need a prescription from a clinician for Plan B or other ECP methods.

Disadvantages of ECP or Emergency Contraceptive Pills

- Does not work if already pregnant.
- Limited time frame (ECP must be used within 72 hours or three days after unprotected sex).
- Is not an ongoing method of contraception.
- Nausea occurs in 23% to 50 % of women who use this method (medications to prevent nausea are available).
- Vomiting occurs in 5 to 25% of women who use this method (medications to prevent vomiting are available).
- Ectopic (tubal) pregnancy may be a possible result.
- ECP changes the amount, duration, and timing of the next menstrual period in about 10 to 15% of women treated.
- There is still a chance of pregnancy. If menstrual cycle does not start in 7 days, consider pregnancy and contact your family planning clinician.
- Does not provide protection from sexually transmitted diseases.

How do I decide?

- Do you want to be pregnant?
- Do you understand that there is a possibility of pregnancy after taking ECP?
- Do you have unprotected sex frequently?
- Is 72 hours enough time for you to make a decision and get ECP?
- Does this method fit with your religious or moral beliefs?
- Do you want to discuss this method with your clinician, family planning clinic staff, husband, partner, friend, or family member?

For more information about ECP, check out [Not-2-Late.com](#) or [Barr Pharmaceuticals](#). In the Philadelphia area, [click here](#) for a list of local family planning clinics. Outside of Philadelphia, please [click here](#) for a clinic near you.

Reminder: This method does not provide any protection against sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) including HIV and Hepatitis B. Using a condom consistently can help protect you from STD's.