

## ABOUT EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

EC is birth control you can use to prevent pregnancy up to five days (120 hours) after sex. It may be needed if you weren't using birth control when you had penile-vaginal sex, you forgot to take your birth control, your partner's condom slipped off or broke, your partner didn't pull out in time, or you had unprotected penile-vaginal sex. It is also known as the "morning after pill."

### HOW MUCH DOES EC COST?

The cost depends on the method and place you buy it. For the IUD - contact your insurance company for copay information.

### WHERE CAN I GET EC?

At UNC, you can go directly to the Campus Health Pharmacy or Student Stores Pharmacy to get EC pills without an appointment or prescription. To be evaluated for an IUD as EC call Campus Health as soon as possible at 919.966.2281.

### CAN I USE EC INSTEAD OF REGULAR BIRTH CONTROL?

EC pills should not be used as an ongoing regular birth control method. They are not nearly as effective and can also be very expensive. The copper IUD, however, can be inserted for EC purposes and left in for ongoing contraception.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EC METHODS AND THE ABORTION PILL?

EC methods do not cause abortions. All EC methods work to prevent ovulation, fertilization or implantation. If a woman is already pregnant, meaning that a fertilized egg has implanted in the uterus, EC will not work. EC is not the same as mifepristone (RU-486), a pill used for medical abortion.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

- Campus Health Gynecology 919.966.3650
- Campus Health Pharmacy 919.966.6554 or Student Stores Pharmacy 919.966.8166
- SHARE (Student Wellness) 919.962.WELL

## FOR FURTHER READING:

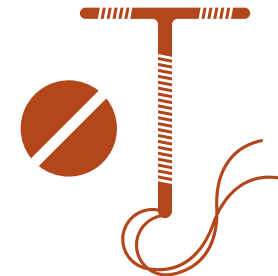
- [bedsider.org](http://bedsider.org)
- [ec.princeton.edu](http://ec.princeton.edu)

# EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

campus  
HEALTH

campushealth.unc.edu | 919.966.2281

James A. Taylor Building  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Student Affairs



Updated August 2019

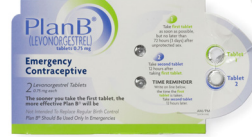
## OPTIONS FOR EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION (EC)

### NON-HORMONAL COPPER IUD (PARAGARD®)



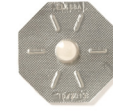
- **Pros:** Nearly 100% effective at preventing pregnancy when placed within 5 days after unprotected sex; it is the most effective form of emergency contraception available. Can prevent future pregnancies for up to 10 years or longer (can be removed any time for quick return to fertility). This method is non-hormonal and some studies have shown that it may reduce risk of endometrial cancer. Insurance may cover all or some of the cost. The copper IUD is most effective at any weight.
- **Cons:** Must be inserted into the uterus by a medical provider. If your insurance does not cover all of it, the IUD and insertion may be expensive. Possible heavier and longer periods and/or more cramping. No protection against STIs. Can be removed after 1 month.
- **How it works:** The IUD's precise mechanism is not known; likely several factors are involved. The copper ions appear to impair sperm and ova function as well as prevent fertilization.

### LEVONORGESTREL PILL (PLAN B ONE-STEP®, ATERA®, NEXT CHOICE ONE DOSE®, EContra EZ®)



- **Pros:** Can be used up to 5 days (120 hours) after unprotected sex but may be less effective as time passes. Easy to access - anyone can obtain without a prescription at pharmacies, including Campus Health Pharmacy. Can be obtained before you might need it in case of emergencies.
- **Cons:** May cause your next period to be 1-2 days earlier or later than you expect and be heavier or lighter. Frequent use may cause periods to become irregular. May cause nausea (take pills with food to reduce this effect. If you throw up within 2 hours of taking the pill, notify your provider). Less effective if you weigh over 165 lbs or BMI of 26 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or greater.
- **How it works:** These pills contain progestin, which prevents pregnancy by delaying ovulation.

### ULIPRISTAL (ELLA®)



- **Pros:** FDA approved for use up to 5 days (120 hours) after unprotected sex. Insurance may cover all or some of the cost of ulipristal like it would any other prescription. Can be obtained with a prescription in case you need it in the future.
- **Cons:** Requires a prescription from a provider or pharmacist. The most common side effects include nausea, menstrual cramps or headaches. Ulipristal may temporarily reduce the effectiveness of other hormonal contraceptive methods. For 5 days after taking ulipristal, you should discontinue using your usual hormonal contraceptive (pill, patch, ring) and use a backup method of birth control (like condoms) for 2 weeks (or at least 7 days after starting/re-starting hormonal contraception). Ulipristal may be less effective in women who weigh more than 196 lbs or with a Body Mass Index of 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or greater. The copper IUD is most effective at any weight.
- **How it works:** Ulipristal suppresses progesterone, delaying ovulation for up to 5 days.

**Emergency Contraceptive Pills are not as effective as a regular method of birth control.**

**No form of emergency contraception protects against Sexually Transmitted Infections. Contact your provider for testing information.**