Emergency Contraception

- Emergency contraception (EC), previously known as the "Morning-After Pill", are pills taken within 120 hours after unprotected intercourse to prevent pregnancy. EC can reduce your chance of getting pregnant by approximately 89% if taken in the first 72 hours and is somewhat less effective if taken between 72 and 120 hours (3-5 days) after the unprotected event. As compared to Ella, studies suggest Plan B may be a little less effective when taken after day 4 of the unprotected event.

- ECs can prevent pregnancy by temporarily stopping ovulation (the release of eggs). They also may stop fertilization (the joining of an egg and sperm), or stop implantation (the attachment of a fertilized egg to the uterine wall).

- ECs will not work if you are already pregnant and should not be taken if pregnancy is suspected.

- If your previous menstrual cycle was unusual, or you suspect that you may already be pregnant, a pregnancy test is advised prior to taking EC. If your pregnancy test is negative, it is ok to take EC. If your pregnancy test is positive, do not take EC. Call the Clinic Nurse Advice Line at 643-7197.

- For information on pregnancy testing at Tang see: [https://uhs.berkeley.edu/medical/primary-care/womens-health/pregnancy-options/pregnancy-testing-tang](https://uhs.berkeley.edu/medical/primary-care/womens-health/pregnancy-options/pregnancy-testing-tang)

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PLAN B One Step is 1 pill of progestin only (no estrogen) hormone. It should be taken orally as soon as possible after unprotected intercourse or up to 5 days after. Plan B may be less effective in women with a BMI of 30 or above. It is available by request without a prescription at the Tang Center pharmacy and most community pharmacies.

NEXT CHOICE is a generic version of progestin only EC. It is 2 pills that can be taken at the same time, or 12 hours apart.

ELLA is available only by prescription. It is a progesterone agonist, well tolerated and very effective, but not for use if possible existing pregnancy or in breastfeeding women. It delays ovulation by 5 days if taken as soon as possible after unprotected intercourse. Do not take if more than one episode of unprotected intercourse since your last normal menstrual period. Start or resume hormonal contraception no sooner than 5 days after use of Ella. In addition abstain or use a barrier method for 7 days after starting/resuming hormonal contraception. If planning to start depo-provera, implant or IUD, check with your health care provider on how soon you can start these methods after taking Ella. Ella is available by prescription from your health care provider and by a visit to Tang urgent care (drop in) or primary care RN appointment if screening guidelines are met.

PARAGARD IUD if inserted within 5 days of unprotected intercourse works well as EC in women who desire long term reversible contraception and have no contraindications. 2 appointments are required and must occur within the 5 days. Contact the Advice Nurse (510-643-7197) if interested and this process can be expedited.

To find various brands of pills that can be used as emergency contraception: [http://ec.princeton.edu/questions/dose.html#dose](http://ec.princeton.edu/questions/dose.html#dose)
Emergency Contraception (continued)

The following symptoms or side-effects may occur in women who take Emergency Contraception:

- Nausea, and occasionally, vomiting. Nausea is usually worse when the stomach is empty. Try eating small amounts of food at frequent intervals. For example, eat a cracker or light snack every 1 or 2 hours. If vomiting occurs within 1 to 2 hours after taking the tablets, please call the clinic for advice. It is possible that you may not have absorbed enough of the hormone to protect you against pregnancy. You may pre-treat for nausea with Dramamine®, Bonine® (Meclizine Hydrochloride) or Benadryl ® (Diphenhydramine). These medications are available without a prescription. They may cause drowsiness.
- Breast tenderness. This may be uncomfortable but will go away when you start your period. A well-fitting bra and Tylenol may be helpful.
- You should have a period within 2-4 weeks after taking EC. Sometimes EC can make your period a week earlier or later than usual. **We recommend all women take a pregnancy test 2 weeks after using emergency contraception if no menstrual period.** Home pregnancy tests are available at a minimal cost from the Tang Pharmacy.

**Take EC as soon as possible after unprotected intercourse, but not more than 5 days after.**

- Emergency contraception is not intended to be used as a substitute for contraception. It is not as effective as regular birth control methods. If you use a barrier method, keep a dose of EC on hand. Remember it is advised that you start EC as soon as possible and within 120 hours (5 days) of a contraceptive failure and take a pregnancy test 2 weeks after use.

- Unprotected intercourse can result in sexually transmitted diseases. Schedule an appointment for screening tests for sexually transmitted diseases 1 to 2 weeks after possible exposure, or sooner if you have unusual symptoms. You can also do self-directed STI testing (uhs.berkeley.edu search “STI Testing”)

- Though serious side effects such as blood clotting, stroke, hypertension or heart attack have on rare occasions been associated with the longer-term use of oral contraceptives, complications have not been reported with the use of EC.

- Some medications may make EC less effective (i.e. Griseofulvin, medications to prevent seizures, HIV, or tuberculosis)

- Read the package insert for instructions specific to your EC medication

For more information about EC or contraception, good websites include www.ec.princeton.edu, www.plannedparenthood.org and www.womenshealth.gov

Check our **Website:** uhs.berkeley.edu to learn more about this and other medical concerns. For **Appointments:** etang.berkeley.edu or call 510-642-2000 For **Advice:** call 510-643-7197