

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION (EC) ("MORNING AFTER PILL")

*For women who have had **unprotected** intercourse or failed contraception (broken condom) and **don't** wish to become pregnant, an option to prevent pregnancy is emergency contraception, commonly known as the "morning after pill". IF you have had **unprotected** intercourse within the past 5 days, EC may be for you. Please read this information sheet to see if EC is an option for you.*

- 1. WHAT IS EC?** Emergency contraception (EC) is used to prevent pregnancy by taking hormones found commonly in contraceptive pills. The dose and timing of the pills are different than that used for regular oral contraceptive pills (OCPs). Do *not* try to use OCPs on your own as morning after pills. As with any form of birth control, EC is not perfect. Pregnancy rates have varied in studies from 0-3% with EC. We prescribe the medicine Plan B for EC. Regular OCPs contain two hormones—an estrogen and a progesterone—while Plan B is simply a progesterone hormone. The hormone in Plan B is a well-known commonly used medication.
- 2. WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF PREGNANCY WITHOUT EC?** The chance of pregnancy from a single act of unprotected intercourse is about 20-30% in the middle of the menstrual cycle when ovulation occurs (two weeks before the next period) to about 2-4% at other times in the cycle. BUT it is difficult to rely on the timing of the menstrual cycle to predict ovulation so it's difficult to predict your risk of pregnancy accurately.
- 3. HOW DOES EC WORK?** It is not known exactly. It may be because it makes the uterine lining unable to accept a fertilized egg, induces menstruation, or suppresses ovulation.
- 4. WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND SIDE EFFECTS?** A minority of women experienced the side effects of nausea, abdominal pain, tiredness, headache, dizziness, breast tenderness, vomiting and diarrhea. See package insert for more details.
- 5. HOW IS EC GIVEN?** You will be given a prescription for Plan B. It can be taken in 2 ways: 1) Take the 2 pills at once as soon as you can, or 2) Take the first dose of 1 pill as soon as possible and take the second, and last dose of 1 pill, 12 hours later. Try to keep as close to 12 hours as possible because the medication works best this way. Take the pills with food if you can.
- 6. WHAT IF EC FAILS?** No form of birth control is perfect. If you do become pregnant, return to Student Health Services to discuss your options.
- 7. OPTIONS** It may be hard to decide if EC is right for you. You may decide against it and return to Student Health Services for a pregnancy test. If you do become pregnant, we can provide information and referrals about options.

Student Health Services,

Important Numbers to know:

General Information: (860) 486-4700

Women's Clinic (860) 486-4837

Advice Nurse (860) 486-3427



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