

## Emergency Contraception (EC)/Morning-after Pill (MAP)

### ***What is emergency contraception?***

Emergency contraception's purpose is to prevent pregnancy after a woman has had unprotected sex.

### ***When should it be used?***

Emergency Contraception is made to use anytime a woman has intercourse without using birth control or if there is a birth control failure. Taking it as early as possible after the incident increases its effectiveness.

Plan B One-Step and Next Choice is made to be taken within 72 hours of the unprotected incident. Ella can be used up to 120 hours.

### ***Does EC contain hormones?***

Yes, morning-after pills contain either levonorgestrel (Plan B One-Step, Next Choice) or ulipristal (Ella). These are progestin-type hormones similar to what is found in birth control pills.

### ***How effective is EC?***

If you take Plan B One-Step within 24 hours, it is about 95% effective. If you take Plan B One-Step or Ella within 72 hours after you've had unprotected sex, they reduce the risk of pregnancy by up to 89%. The effectiveness of Ella extends to 5 days. All ECs are only effective for one episode of unprotected sex.

### ***How does the EC work?***

Morning-after pills do not end a pregnancy that has implanted. Depending on where you are in your menstrual cycle, morning-after pills act like birth control methods by one or more of the following actions: delaying or preventing ovulation, blocking fertilization, or keeping a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus. Recent evidence strongly suggests that Plan B One-Step and Next Choice do not inhibit implantation. It's not clear if the same is true for Ella.

### ***Is EC the same as the abortion pill?***

The morning-after pill is not the same as mifepristone (Mifeprex), also known as RU-486 or the abortion pill. Mifeprex terminates an established pregnancy — one in which the fertilized egg has attached to the uterine wall and has already begun to develop.

### ***Does the EC prevent STDs?***

EC does not protect against HIV or STDs.

### ***Who should use the EC?***

Women who:

- Didn't use any birth control
- Had a condom come off or break
- Had the diaphragm slip out of place
- Missed at least two or three active birth control pills in a row
- Forgot to insert their ring
- Have any reason to think their birth control might not have worked
- Were forced to have sex

### ***Who should not use the EC?***

Women who:

- Know they are pregnant or suspect they might be
- Have a clotting disorder or have had blood clots
- Have a history of allergy or hypersensitivity to any ingredients
- Have a history of recent abnormal vaginal bleeding that has not been evaluated.

### ***Is EC available at SHC?***

Yes, Plan B is available at a very reasonable cost. No prescription is needed. Go straight to the pharmacy.

A prescription for Ella may be obtained by making an appointment in the Women's Clinic. Ella is not available at SHC pharmacy.