

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE PILL (MORNING AFTER PILL)



Care
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What is the emergency contraceptive pill?

The emergency contraceptive pill is a contraceptive method used after sex has occurred. It is used to prevent pregnancy if you had sex with no contraceptive protection. For example, when there is a broken condom, missed or late pills or no contraception used. It is sometimes called the 'morning after pill' but it can be used at any time: day or night and up to 5 days after sex.

You can choose emergency contraceptive pills or the non-hormonal copper IUD for emergency contraception.

The emergency contraceptive pill is available in two types in Australia:

- Ulipristal acetate (sold as EllaOne)
- Levonorgestrel (multiple brands)

How effective is the emergency contraceptive pill?

Emergency contraceptive pills are around 85% effective at preventing pregnancy. The ulipristal acetate emergency contraceptive pill (EllaOne), is more effective at preventing pregnancy than the levonorgestrel emergency contraceptive pill.

Another emergency contraception option is the non-hormonal copper IUD. It is more than 99% effective at preventing pregnancy.

How does the emergency contraceptive pill work?

The emergency contraceptive pill prevents or delays the ovaries from releasing an egg.

How do I use the emergency contraceptive pill?

The emergency contraceptive pill should be taken (swallowed) as soon as possible after unprotected sex. It can be taken up to 4 or 5 days after unprotected sex, depending on the type of pill you take. Speak to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist for further information. If you have unprotected sex again you may need another dose

Where can I get the emergency contraceptive pill?

You can buy the emergency contraceptive pill at a pharmacy. You do not need a script. The price will vary depending on the type of emergency contraceptive pill and the pharmacy.

What stops the emergency contraceptive pill from working?

Emergency contraceptive pills may not work if you:

- are already pregnant
- are taking certain medications (check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist)
- take them too late after unprotected sex
- vomit within 3 hours of taking them.

What is good about the emergency contraceptive pill?

- It provides a safe option to reduce the risk of pregnancy after sex.
- You do not need a script from a doctor or nurse to buy the emergency contraceptive pill.

Are there any side effects from using the emergency contraceptive pill?

The emergency contraceptive pill can change the amount of vaginal bleeding for your next menstrual period. It may also make your period late or earlier, or it may come as you normally expect. If your period is more than 7 days late or lighter than usual, take a pregnancy test as soon as you can.

Other possible side effects for a small number of users can include:

- nausea
- headaches
- dizziness
- abdominal (tummy) pain.

Can the emergency contraceptive pill cause any serious health problems?

There are no known serious risks from taking emergency contraceptive pills.

