

SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY COUNSELING AND HEALTH SERVICES

PLAN B (Emergency Contraception) INFORMATION SHEET

What is emergency contraception?

Emergency contraception pills, also known as Plan B, are composed of either progestin only or estrogen and progestin hormones used in birth control pills. Emergency contraception is contraception after intercourse but before a woman becomes pregnant. The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) considers Plan B to be safe and effective. It is at least 75% effective if started within 120 hours after having sex without birth control.

How does it work?

Emergency contraception is thought to work like birth control pills by preventing or delaying ovulation, making it difficult for sperm to fertilize an egg or by producing changes in the lining of the uterus. It does not cause an abortion or miscarriage. The medication should be taken as soon as possible after a single act of unprotected intercourse, and must be taken within 120 hours of that intercourse. Plan B may not prevent a tubal (ectopic) pregnancy, which is a medical emergency. Plan B will not work if a woman is already pregnant. A pregnancy test maybe done to rule out an established pregnancy. Pregnancy tests are only sensitive if a pregnancy is greater than 11 days; therefore, if there has been previous unprotected intercourse, the test may be invalid.

Is it safe for me?

If a woman is already pregnant, it is unlikely that this treatment would be harmful to the woman or to a fetus. The FDA has removed warnings regarding risks to the fetus from oral contraceptive packaging.

What are the side effects and how long do they last?

About one third of women taking Plan B have nausea and vomiting. These effects may last a few hours or more. A few women may experience headaches, breast tenderness, dizziness and fluid retention. In rare cases, dangerous complications were reported: blood clots in lungs or legs, stroke, heart attack, liver tumor or damage, gallbladder disease and high blood pressure.

Can I have sex after I take the doses of medication?

Yes, but you should discuss your present method of birth control with your provider to determine whether there are any special instructions since you are using Plan B. Emergency contraceptive pills do not protect you from sexually transmitted diseases.

Do I need to see my practitioner after I take Plan B?

- For routine follow-up
- To chose an on-going safe and effective contraceptive method
- If you do not get a menstrual period within 2-3 weeks of taking Plan B
- If you are concerned about sexually transmitted diseases.

Call Campus Police at 978-542-6111 or go to the nearest Emergency Room if you experience any of the following after taking Plan B:

Jaundice - yellowing of skin or whites of eyes
Severe headache, dizziness, weakness, numbness, or trouble speaking
Blurred vision, loss of vision
Chest pain, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing
Severe abdominal or leg pain (especially the calf)

SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY COUNSELING AND HEALTH SERVICE
PLAN B (Emergency Contraception) INSTRUCTION SHEET

Swallow the one tablet by mouth with food or milk as soon as possible, but no later than 120 hours after unprotected intercourse.

Follow the instructions that come with your medication.

If your period does not start within 2-3 weeks, see your clinician for an exam and confidential, free pregnancy test.

Plan B does not protect you from pregnancy after treatment. Do not have unprotected intercourse in the days or weeks after this medication. As soon as possible, begin using a method of birth control consistently and correctly. Discuss birth control options with your clinician and partner.

Use condoms every time you have sex to reduce your risk of getting any sexually transmitted infections, including HIV or AIDS.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE WITH ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES

If you are using emergency contraception because of missed pills, take Plan B as directed. Restart birth control pills the day after taking Plan B. (Punch out and discard the missed pills.) You will need to use a back up method of birth control for one week.

Call Campus Police at 978-542-6111 or go to the nearest Emergency Room if you experience any of the following after taking Plan B:

- **Jaundice - yellowing of skin or whites of eyes**
- **Severe headache, dizziness, weakness, numbness, or trouble speaking**
- **Blurred vision, loss of vision**
- **Chest pain, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing**
- **Severe abdominal or leg pain (especially the calf)**