

SSC COUNSELING & HEALTH SERVICES
PLAN B (Emergency Contraception) INFO 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 may be 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 1/3 of women taking Plan B have nausea and vomiting which may last a few hours or more. A few women may experience headaches, breast tenderness, dizziness and fluid retention. In rare cases, dangerous complications occurred: blood clots in lungs or legs, stroke, heart attack, liver tumor or damage, gallbladder disease & 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 if there are any special instructions since you are using Plan B. Emergency contraceptive pills do not protect you from STD's.

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

- For routine follow-up
- To choose 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)