

## EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION (PLAN B)

Plan B is now available at most pharmacies over the counter for any purchaser who is 18 years or older (including men). Purchasers younger than 18 years old still need a prescription from a medical professional. Plan B will not work in someone who is already pregnant.

The Emergency Contraceptive Pill (EC), formerly known as the Morning After Pill, (or MAP), is a method of preventing a pregnancy from occurring after an incident of unprotected intercourse or contraceptive failure. Studies show it greatly reduces the chance of pregnancy by interfering with ovulation or the implantation of a fertilized egg in the uterine lining. Older formulations of MAP contained estrogen and progesterone which frequently caused nausea and vomiting, but the newer treatment containing progesterone only (Plan B) is more effective with few side effects and a good safety profile. If a pregnancy occurs, despite the use of Plan B, a woman can choose to continue the pregnancy without fear of harm to the embryo or may choose to terminate the pregnancy.

***The pills are most effective if taken within 72 hours after unprotected intercourse.*** In fact, the sooner the pills are taken, the better, although there is still some value in taking Plan B up to five days after intercourse. The highest risk time for pregnancy is right before or during ovulation. In most women this is around mid-cycle, but since this timing is not always known, Plan B may be taken at any time there is a risk of pregnancy.

### DIRECTION FOR USE

- You might want to have a small, bland meal or snack before taking your pills. Coffee, alcohol or other substances that may upset the stomach should be avoided.
- Take the first dose of Plan B as soon as possible. Although the package literature states to take the second dose 12 hours later, it is more effective to take both pills at the same time and this is the recommendation of most experts in the field.
- The second dose (if not taken together) must be taken exactly 12 hours later. If nausea occurs with the first dose, an anti-nausea medication, available over the counter, like Bonine or Meclizine is advised before taking the second dose. If vomiting occurs within one hour of taking the pills, the treatment needs to be repeated.
- If a menstrual period does not occur within three weeks, a pregnancy test should be done at home or in the clinic.

- Other methods of birth control used consistently are more reliable in preventing pregnancy. We encourage you to make an appointment for family planning if you desire those services or even if you would like to receive more information.
- Plan B does not protect one from sexually transmitted infections (STIs). If you are concerned that you may have been exposed to an STI, please discuss this with your clinician to determine what testing or treatment may be appropriate.

### **COMMON SIDE EFFECTS**

Plan B is associated with minor unpleasant side effects in less than 25% of women using it. Nausea for a day and moodiness and breast tenderness which will resolve with the next period are the most common complaints. Your next period may be different than, usual, but if it is extremely light, you should have a pregnancy test done.

### **PURCHASING PLAN B**

Prices of Plan B vary greatly at different pharmacies. At the Student Health Center, we have attempted to make this product available to students at our pharmacy inexpensively and conveniently. Charges will appear on your University bill as “pharmacy” charge. If you prefer not to have this show on your bill, take your receipt to the front desk and payment can be made at the time of purchase. Plan B may be purchased ahead of time and used when needed up, until the expiration date on the package.

### **For More Information**

<http://www.go2planb.com/ForConsumers/Index.aspx>  
<http://ec.princeton.edu/>

**If you have further questions or problems with EC, please stop by the Student Health Center, or call**

Appointments 459-2500 (Contraception, STI testing)  
Pharmacist 459-2360