

Emergency Contraception (EC)

Levonorgestrel 1.5 mg Pill, Ulipristal Acetate Pill, Copper IUD, Levonorgestrel 52 mg IUD



How does emergency contraception work?

- There are **4 types** of EC: **2 pills and 2 IUDs**. 1 pill and 1 IUD contain progestin hormone and 1 pill and 1 IUD are non-hormonal.
- EC pills work by **delaying ovulation**. If there is no egg for sperm to fertilize, pregnancy will not occur. EC does not interrupt an existing pregnancy or cause abortion. EC pills, often called the **“morning after pill,”** can be taken any time within 5 days of sex to prevent pregnancy. They do not prevent pregnancy from sex outside that 5 day window, including sex after the pill is taken.
- IUDs work primarily by preventing the sperm from fertilizing an egg. Hormonal IUDs can prevent ovulation some of the time. There may be other ways the IUDs work that are not fully understood.
- IUDs work within 5 days of sex and provide ongoing contraception after insertion.
- EC can be used in different scenarios:
 - Unprotected penis-vagina sex.
 - Concern about if your first method of contraception was used correctly.
 - As a good short-term “bridge” method until you can access another method you prefer.
 - As primary “plan A” contraception if you have sex infrequently.
 - After sexual assault.
- EC pills can be used with another method of contraception to provide more protection against pregnancy. But do not use *Plan B* and *Ella* within 5 days of each other—their active drugs will cancel each other out.
- EC works for people of **all ages and those using gender affirming hormone therapy**. **Some methods work less well for people with higher BMIs.**

	 Levonorgestrel 1.5 mg Pill	 Ulipristal Acetate Pill	 Hormonal IUD (Levonorgestrel 52 mg)	 Copper IUD
Brand names	<i>Plan B One Step, Take Action, My Way, AfterPill, My Choice, and other generics.</i>	<i>Ella</i>	<i>Mirena, Liletta</i>	<i>Paragard</i>
Form	Pill		IUD	
Active drug	Levonorgestrel (progestin hormone)	Ulipristal acetate	Levonorgestrel (progestin hormone)	Copper
Access	Over the counter or prescription.	Requires prescription.	See a provider to have an IUD inserted and removed. You may be able to remove the IUD yourself if you can feel the strings.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a prescription from your provider (call their office, have a telemedicine appointment, or visit in-person), a family planning clinic, or a birth control app. • Get a prescription with refills for future use. • Get a prescription before you need it or when you need it. • Have the pill at home before you need it or get it when you need it. 			
Timing use	Effective up to 5 days (120 hours) after sex, but most effective in the first 3 days (72 hours) after sex.	Equally effective up to 5 days (120 hours) after sex.		
BMI limits	Works best for people with BMI under 26.	Works best for people with BMI under 35.	Works for all BMIs equally.	

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How well it prevents pregnancy	89%	94%	99%	
	Some medications can make Plan B, Ella, and hormonal IUDs not work as well.			Not affected by medication.
Privacy and control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your partner cannot see or feel that you are using a pill. Your partner or someone else may be able to find your pill package stored or in the trash. They may see you take the pill. Your partner may be able to feel the IUD strings with their fingers or penis during sex. Your provider can trim the strings shorter if this happens and is bothersome. Someone else cannot see that you are using an IUD. Someone you live with or who you share insurance with may see a bill from your insurance. If anyone else is tracking your period, they may notice a change to your period. 			
Interaction with new or ongoing contraception	Can begin or continue another method of contraception immediately.	It is recommended not to use pills, patch, or ring until 5+ days after using Ella and then use a backup method for 7 days after starting the pill, patch, or ring. It is okay to start the shot or implant at the same time as Ella. Ella may work less well, so use a backup method for 12 days.	Can leave the IUD in as ongoing contraception, or have it removed after your next period. You may be able to remove the IUD yourself if you can feel the strings.	
Side effects	There are no long-term side effects of EC pills. In the short-term, you may experience nausea, dizziness, breast tenderness, spotting, or change to period timing.		<i>Scan the QR code at the bottom of this sheet for the hormonal IUD and copper IUD information sheets, which list possible side effects.</i>	
Postpartum use	All forms of EC are safe to use right after giving birth. Data shows that all forms of EC have no effect on lactation, breastfeeding/chestfeeding, or infant development. Ella (ulipristal acetate) has not been extensively studied in the context of breastfeeding/chestfeeding, but the InfantRisk Center, a university research center that studies the transfer of medication into breastmilk, recommends that it is safe to use. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends discarding pumped breastmilk for 24 hours after using Ella.			
Questions to ask your provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can I use EC pills as my primary contraception? Can I get EC pills before I need them? Can the IUD be removed after it worked as EC? Can I use EC pills frequently? Can I take two EC pills if I have a higher BMI? Can I start a new method or continue my current method when taking EC pills? 			

Scan for a contraception guide and information sheets on each method.

