

Live Well to
Learn Well

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health.cornell.edu

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Monday–Saturday

Check web for hours,
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information

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What is EC?

Emergency Contraception (EC) is birth control used after unprotected sex to help prevent pregnancy. It works by delaying or temporarily stopping ovulation (the release of an egg that can be fertilized by sperm), or by changing the environment of the uterus or cervix so that sperm and egg do not meet.

EC is best used right away (or up to five days after sex) if you think your birth control failed, you didn't use contraception, or vaginal intercourse was unplanned, unintended, or unwanted.

How effective is EC?

Pills: EC can reduce the risk of pregnancy by 52 to 100 percent, depending on how soon you take it, the brand of EC, and timing of unprotected sex related to your cycle. If you do not get your period within three weeks of taking EC, a pregnancy test is recommended.

Copper-T IUD: Emergency insertion of a copper IUD up to five days after unprotected sex can reduce the risk of pregnancy by up to 99 percent. Though emergency contraception is an option for up to five days after unprotected sex, it should be used as soon as possible to maximize effectiveness.

What types are available?

Progestin-only pills: Plan B, Plan B One-Step, Next Choice, and Levonorgestrel Tablets are available for sale directly from pharmacists without a prescription.

Ulipristal Acetate pills: Ella is available by prescription only. Research suggests Ella is more effective than progestin-only pills when taken around the time of ovulation, on day four or five following unprotected sex, and by people with a Body Mass Index (BMI*) over 26. When taking Ella, it's important to remember:

- Use only once per menstrual cycle.
- If you use hormonal birth control (pills, patch, or ring) restart your birth control five days after taking Ella and use a back-up method until the end of your cycle.
- Many health insurance plans will cover the cost of emergency contraception when you have



Emergency contraception (pills or IUD) is an option for up to five days after unprotected sex, but should be used as soon as possible to maximize effectiveness.

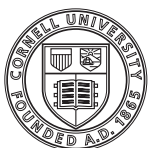
a prescription. Call Cornell Health if you need a prescription now or would like to have a prescription on hand for the future.

Copper-T IUD: Intrauterine Devices (IUD) require an appointment with a health care provider for insertion. In addition to EC, an IUD can be used as ongoing contraception for up to 10 years. Though highly effective, they are not appropriate for everyone. Your provider can discuss the benefits and drawbacks of using a copper IUD as EC.

What is the best choice for me?

- **If it has been three days or fewer** since unprotected sex and you are of average body weight (BMI* under 26), over-the-counter EC may be your best option. Progestin EC pills are available at the pharmacy in Cornell Health.
- **If it has been four or five days** since unprotected sex, prescription EC may be your best option. Call Cornell Health to discuss.
- **If you have a BMI* of 26 to 35**, a prescription EC may be your best option. Call Cornell Health to discuss.
- **If you are thinking about having an IUD placed** as EC, call Cornell Health to discuss.
- **If you have concerns beyond the need for EC** (e.g., being exposed to a sexually transmitted infection, sex against your will, or are not sure if you need emergency contraception), please speak with a Cornell Health nurse by phone (607-255-5155, available 24/7) or in person.

*To calculate your BMI, see page 2.



Why is BMI important?

Research shows that certain EC options are more effective when an individual's Body Mass Index (BMI) falls within a certain range.

You can **calculate your BMI** on the CDC's website: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov):



Just in case

State and international laws vary regarding the availability of EC (both prescription and non-prescription). If you will be leaving campus for a considerable period of time (e.g., summer or winter break, going abroad for a semester), plan ahead. You may want to consider purchasing EC pills to have on hand in case of future contraceptive failure. Consider scheduling an appointment with a Cornell Health clinician to discuss further: health.cornell.edu/appointments.

For more information

- health.cornell.edu [search "EC"]
- planbonestep.com
- ella-now.com
- not-2-late.com