

PLAN B Emergency Contraceptive Pill (Morning After Pill)

What is Plan B?

Plan B is an emergency method of birth control containing the female hormone progestin. Plan B is provided by health professionals, including pharmacists.

To prevent pregnancy, Plan B should be taken within 72 hours after unprotected vaginal sex. If more than 72 hours (3 days), speak to a health care professional. Situations to take Plan B could include:

1. Using no birth control at all.
2. Failed birth control methods.
 - condom breaking or slipping
 - using withdrawal (pulling out)
 - missing some hormonal birth control pills/patches and not using a condom
 - a vaginal ring being out for more than 3 hours
 - getting a Depo-Provera injection late
 - a slipped diaphragm
3. Being raped or having forced sex.

Plan B works to prevent the release of an egg from the ovary, prevent the sperm and egg from meeting or prevent a fertilized egg from attaching to the wall of the uterus. It is 95% effective if taken properly within 24 hours of unprotected sex and about 61% if taken 48-72 hours of unprotected sex. Plan B does not affect your ability to get pregnant in the future. If you are already pregnant, Plan B will not cause an abortion or harm the fetus.

Plan B does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV.

How to use Plan B

You will receive 2 pills in a package. Follow the package instructions carefully.

- Eat a snack or meal
- Take both pills at once

If you have taken Plan B before and been sick to your stomach, take one pill immediately with food and then **12 hours later** take the second pill with

food. (Time it so you don't have to wake up in the middle of the night!).

Taking an anti-nausea pill before you take Plan B will help to stop vomiting.

What else do I need to know?

- The most common side effect of Plan B is nausea but only a few women (6%) will vomit. Taking Plan B with food will help. If you vomit within 1 hour of taking the pills, call the clinic/walk-in/doctor to see if you need another dose. If you vomited due to an upset stomach and you can see the pill in the vomit, you need another pill. If you can't see the pill or if it is more than 1 hour, more pills are not needed.
- Other possible side effects are mild stomach pain, tiredness, headache and spotting or bleeding from the vagina. This usually lasts only a few days.
- See a doctor immediately if you have cramping/severe abdominal (stomach) pain any time before your next period.
- Your next period should begin at its expected time. If it's more than 1 week late, or very different from your normal periods, you should have a pregnancy test.

Can I have Plan B to use in the future?

Some health professionals may offer you Plan B to use at a later date. Make sure to:

- store it in a safe place, away from children
- use it in situations when Plan B may be helpful
- check the expiry date before using it
- follow the instructions carefully

What about ongoing birth control?

Plan B will not protect you from pregnancy during the rest of this menstrual cycle. Another method of birth control, such as condoms, **MUST** be used until your next period. Plan B is not recommended as a regular method of birth control. Speak to a health professional about an ongoing method.

If you are taking Plan B because:

- you missed some birth control pills, and you missed:
 - a) 1, 2 or 3 pills: Do not take any of the missed pills. Take Plan B and then continue on your pack the next day.
 - b) 4 or more birth control pills: Speak with a health professional for advice on restarting the birth control pills.
- your patch fell off or you were late changing the patch: Take the ECP and put on a new patch the next day. This will now be your new patch change day.
- your contraceptive ring was out for more than 3 hours: Take ECP and insert the ring the next day.
- you were late starting your pills/patch/ring (more than 7 days off in total): Make sure to use a back up method such as condoms for the next 7 days.

Since you had unprotected sex, you should be tested for STIs, including HIV.

Use condoms every time to help prevent the spread of STIs, HIV and hepatitis B.

Condoms are free at Healthy Sexuality Clinics.

**For more information, call
Peel Public Health 905-799-7700
and ask for Sexual Health Information
or visit
peelsexualhealth.ca intheknowpeel.ca
peelregion.ca**