



WOMEN'S MEDICAL GROUP  
OBSTETRICS – GYNECOLOGY – INFERTILITY

15151 NATIONAL AVENUE - LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA 95032  
PHONE: (408) 356-0431 - FAX: (408) 356-8569  
[www.losolivos-obgyn.com](http://www.losolivos-obgyn.com)

## EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

An emergency contraceptive is intended to prevent pregnancy when you have experienced contraceptive failure or when you may not have used contraception. It is not intended as a regular birth control method. The emergency contraceptive pills (ECP) do not protect against HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases.

### ***How effective is the ECP?***

ECP will reduce the risk of pregnancy following a single act of unprotected sex from about 8% down to 1%. This represents an 89% reduction in the risk of pregnancy for this single act of unprotected sex.

### ***When should I take the pills?***

The pills should be taken as soon as possible within 72 hours (3 days) after sex. If you are not sure if you are pregnant from sex earlier in the month, you should use a pregnancy test kit prior to taking the ECP.

### ***How do the pills work?***

They may prevent or delay ovulation (release of an egg). They also make it difficult for sperm to fertilize an egg if one has been released from the ovary and may produce changes in the lining of the uterus. The hormones do not work if you are already pregnant and do not increase the rate of miscarriage.

### ***What are the side effects?***

The most common side effects are nausea and vomiting. Headache, breast tenderness, dizziness, fluid retention and menstrual irregularity are less common. Some patients may also experience anxiety, guilt or depression. Serious side effects are rare but include blood clots, strokes and heart attacks. If you experience severe pain in your legs, chest or abdomen, call your doctor immediately.

### ***What are the contraindications to ECP?***

Women who are already pregnant or with a history of stroke, pulmonary embolus, ischemic heart disease, liver tumor or breast cancer should not use ECP. Women with severe hypertension, severe diabetes, or who are currently smoking should avoid using ECP.

### ***What happens if the emergency contraception does not work and I become pregnant?***

The oral contraceptives do not cause birth defects. The risk of tubal pregnancy is not increased. If you become pregnant, it is important to see your doctor so that you may be evaluated and counseled about your options.

### ***Where can I get an emergency contraceptive kit?***

The Plan B Emergency Kit is available by prescription from your physician or through a licensed pharmacist. Many of the pharmacies in Santa Clara County have a trained pharmacist that can dispense the medication without a prescription. Call the pharmacy first or obtain a prescription from your physician. Plan B is one tablet of .75mg Levonorgestrel followed by a second tablet 12 hours later. Birth control pills of the same type can also be used.

Where can I get more information about this?

Plan B information is available at [www.go2planB.com](http://www.go2planB.com). Print a brochure at [http://www.go2planb.com/Plan\\_B.pdf](http://www.go2planb.com/Plan_B.pdf). You can also contact the emergency contraception hotline: telephone 1-888-NOT-2-LATE.

I have read the above, had my questions answered and would like to be prescribe the emergency contraceptive kit.

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Signature

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Date