

Women's Health

Emergency Contraception

Morning-After-Pill

If a condom breaks or you forget to take your pill a few times this month, there is something you can do, but you need to act quickly. Although you can take emergency contraception (EC) within 120 hours after unprotected intercourse, it is much more effective taken within 72 hours. One dedicated emergency contraceptive product is available today. It's called Plan B and is available at the Wellesley College Health Center and over-the-counter to women over 18.

Emergency contraception works by inhibiting or delaying ovulation, preventing fertilization, or preventing implantation of a fertilized egg. Unlike medical abortion drugs, emergency contraception does not interrupt or terminate an established pregnancy; it prevents pregnancy from occurring. That means if you are already pregnant, EC won't work. It's also not foolproof - it only reduces your chance of pregnancy by 75 to 89 percent.

Emergency contraception is for emergencies. In other words, it is not a reliable long-term birth control method and it does not protect against Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs) - before or after its use. It also does not protect you during future acts of intercourse, so it is important that you use another form of birth control if you have sex again.

At the Wellesley College Health Center it is available for \$40 cash payable at the time of the visit.

Follow-up recommendations:

In 2-3 weeks, whether you have had your period or not, you should have an appointment with a clinician for follow-up care. At that time it is a good opportunity to discuss contraceptive choices available. There are always new options and it good to find out what may have become available recently.

During that appointment the clinician will discuss with you which STIs it may make sense to test for depending upon your sexual health history. The testing technology is also always improving and it may be that even a prior relationship potentially exposed you to something that is now something that you could be tested for. Testing is not about "blaming", it is about prevention.

FOLLOW UP IS ESSENTIAL TO GOOD SEXUAL HEALTH