

Buy ECP ahead of time so you'll have some on hand in an emergency. The pills work best the sooner you take them.

ECP does not protect against Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

If you are worried about whether you might have been infected with an STI, talk to your doctor about getting tested and about how you can protect yourself in the future.

Always use a condom even if you are using another birth control method. Condoms are the only form of birth control that can also help guard against STIs.

Abstinence is the only method that is 100% effective in preventing pregnancy and the spread of STIs.

If you do not feel ready to engage in any sexual activity, don't.

See your doctor or get a pregnancy test if your period is over a week late.

Did you Know?

Free pregnancy testing is available at the Sexual Health Centre.

You can also get information about pregnancy options, condoms, birth control, fertility cycles, and more.

All information is confidential.

SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE

Lunenburg County

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Donations always appreciated.

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**SEXUAL
HEALTH CENTRE**

LUNENBURG COUNTY



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All About

**Emergency
Contraception (EC)**

and

**Emergency
Contraceptive Pills
(ECP)**

Sexual Health Centre
Lunenburg County

The experts in sexual and reproductive health

What is Emergency Contraception?

Emergency Contraception is a backup method of birth control you can use if:

- your condom broke, slipped or leaked.
- you missed two or more birth control pills or didn't start your next round of pills, patch, ring, or shot on time, and also had unprotected sex.
- you didn't use any birth control.
- you are using a natural family method and miscalculated your fertile period.
- your partner did not "pull-out" in time.
- you were forced against your will to have sex and were not on birth control.
- you were drunk or high and are not sure whether you had sex and/or if you used any birth control.

ECP is not meant to be used as a routine form of birth control.

1st, it is not as effective as regular forms of birth control (pill, patch, etc.).

2nd, it is expensive, at around \$35 per dose. (You might get it free at a local emergency department but you may have to wait with a lot of people around so it is less confidential.)

3rd, it makes some women feel sick.

What Types are Available?

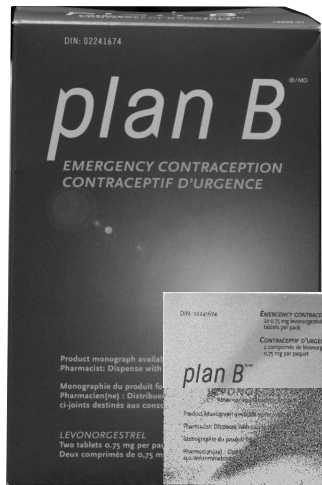
There are 2 types available:

1. Intrauterine Device (IUD)

An IUD can be inserted up to 7 days after having unprotected sex. This must be done by a trained doctor; getting in to see someone in the necessary time frame may be difficult. Another option is to try the Halifax Sexual Health Centre clinic (902-455-9656) which can usually provide service much sooner.

2. Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP)

Formerly called the "morning after pill", ECP can actually be taken up to 5 days after unprotected sex. Because sperm can live inside the body for 5 days, pregnancy can occur any time within this period. However, the sooner you take the pills, the better your chances of not getting pregnant.



The brand you can buy is called **Plan B**[®]. No prescription is needed and no questions are asked. Because of its price, it is often kept behind the counter so you may have to ask for it.

If you are already pregnant, it will *not* cause an abortion.



If you are sexually active, save some money for ECP, just in case something unexpected happens.

What to Expect

About 25% of women feel sick when taking ECP. About 6% throw up. If you want, you can take an anti-nauseant (like Gravol[®]) about an hour before taking ECP. If you throw up within an hour of taking ECP, call your pharmacist or doctor. You might need another dose.

Less common side effects include breast tenderness, headaches, dizziness, fatigue, lower abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Contact your doctor if they are severe or last more than 2 days.

After taking ECP your period should come on time but may be a few days early or late. Spotting may occur a few days after taking ECP.

If you are sexually active, consistent use of a routine method of birth control is the best way to prevent a pregnancy.

ECP is about **95%** effective when used within **24** hours.

ECP is about **85%** effective when used within **25 to 48** hours.

ECP is about **58%** effective when used within **49 to 72** hours.