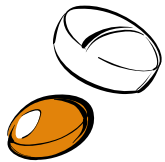


# Prevent unplanned pregnancies. Plan ahead and be prepared.



## Emergency Birth Control Pills versus the Abortion Pill Different medications with very different results.

	<b>Emergency Birth Control (or Emergency Contraception) Plan B</b>	<b>the Abortion Pill Medical Abortion</b>
How does it work?	<p>Emergency birth control works in different ways depending on 1) what point a woman is at in her menstrual cycle when she takes the medication and 2) which kind of emergency birth control she takes. There are two types of emergency birth control pills: Progestin-only oral contraceptives like Plan B or combination oral contraceptives.</p> <p><b>Emergency birth control pills such as <i>Plan B</i> act to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delay or inhibit ovulation (so no egg is released),</li> <li>• Reduce the ability of sperm and egg to move and come together, and</li> <li>• Reduce the readiness of the lining of the uterus so fertilized eggs may not implant.</li> </ul> <p>The Plan B dose consists of two pills that can be taken together or 12 hours apart.</p>	<p>Mifepristone, commonly called “the abortion pill,” causes a non-surgical abortion when used early in pregnancy. This medication blocks receptors for progesterone, a key hormone needed to maintain a pregnancy. A pregnant woman takes two doses of different medications: mifepristone is taken in a doctor’s office and then misoprostol is taken two days later either in the doctor’s office or at home.</p>
Will it end an established pregnancy?	<p>No. Emergency birth control pills will have no effect if a woman already has an established pregnancy.</p> <p>An established pregnancy is a fertilized egg that has already implanted in the uterus.</p>	<p>Yes. This medication does end an established pregnancy.</p>
When can a woman take it?	<p>Emergency birth control can be taken up to 5 days (120 hours) after unprotected sex. <i>The sooner emergency birth control is used, the more effective it is.</i></p>	<p>Up to 49 days after the first day of a woman’s last menstrual period.</p>

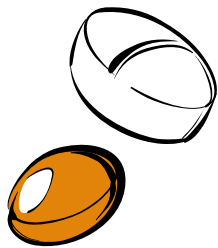


Forsyth County  
**Infant Mortality Reduction Coalition**  
[www.HelpOurBabies.org](http://www.HelpOurBabies.org)

[www.HealthyCommunity.ws](http://www.HealthyCommunity.ws)



What are the brand names?	Plan B (pills designed only for emergency birth control) as well as specific combinations of many common birth control prescriptions that are FDA approved to be used as emergency birth control.	Mifeprex™
How effective is it?	Plan B emergency birth control pills reduce the risk of pregnancy after unprotected sex by 89%. Combination emergency birth control pills reduce the risk of pregnancy by 74%. <b><i>Plan B in particular is more effective the sooner a woman takes it after sexual assault or unprotected sex.</i></b>	The mifepristone combination medications are 96-97% effective. In 3-4% of women, a surgical abortion will also be needed to end the pregnancy.
What are the side effects?	Nausea and vomiting may occur but the incidence is low. Some women experience spotting or changes in the amount, duration or timing of their next menstrual cycle.	Common side effects are abdominal pain, bleeding, and gastrointestinal distress.
How does a woman get it?	Emergency birth control pills are available without a prescription from the pharmacist for women 18 and over, and by prescription only for women 17 and under. A young woman can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask her health care provider for a prescription and have the prescription filled at a local pharmacy. In Forsyth County, over half of all pharmacies do carry Plan B in stock.</li> <li>• Call the national hotline at 1-888-NOT-2-LATE (1-888-668-2528) to find a local provider or pharmacy.</li> </ul>	The Medication is available in some doctor's offices or clinics only. It is never offered by prescription for a patient to pick up at a pharmacy. Check availability when scheduling an appointment.
Is this legal?	Yes. Plan B became available in the United States in 1999.	Yes. Mifepristone became legal in the US in 2000.
What does it cost?	Cost varies depending on the medication. Plan B costs about \$25 and has a shelf life of up to four years. For young women, there may be additional charges for an office visit to get a prescription.	Approximately \$350 to \$500. This includes initial and follow up physician visits, medication, and laboratory testing.



**Remember:**

- **Emergency birth control (EBC) pills are best used as a back up to another reliable form of birth control.**
- **EBC pills may prevent pregnancy for up to 5 days after unprotected sex.**
- **EBC pills do not protect against sexually transmitted diseases.**

**Information sources:**

Contraceptive Options patient handout: *The Female Patient: A Peer Reviewed Journal*. April 2005.  
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Trussel, J. et al. The Role of Emergency Contraception. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*. 190, S30-8. January 2004  
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