

## Emergency Contraception (EC)

### What is emergency contraception?

Emergency Contraception (EC) is used to prevent unplanned pregnancy. It is a safe option for nearly all women who have had unprotected sex with a man and do not want to become pregnant.

EC is an option when:

- vaginal intercourse was unplanned, unintended, or unwanted
- contraceptives were not used or were not used successfully (e.g., a condom broke, a diaphragm slipped out of place)

Although sometimes referred to as “the morning after pill,” EC can be used successfully up to 5 days (120 hours) after unprotected vaginal intercourse. *The sooner EC is started, the better the chance of avoiding pregnancy.*

### How does it work?

There are two kinds of EC. One is a “combined” oral contraceptive (birth control pill) that contains the hormones estrogen and progestin. The other contains progestin only. Both types of EC are given in a

dose higher than that normally used for contraception. The higher dosage prevents pregnancy because it disrupts the hormonal patterns that establish a pregnancy.

The pills are given in two doses. The first dose must be taken orally within five days (120 hours) of unprotected vaginal intercourse. The second dose should be taken orally 12 hours after the first. The number of pills in the dose depends upon the brand used.

### If you think you need EC

- **IF YOU OR YOUR PARTNER ARE 18 OR OLDER:** Emergency Contraception is available to you *without a prescription* at the Gannett Pharmacy when the building is open. To purchase EC, simply bring a photo ID to show at the time of purchase. If it is after business hours, call Gannett and ask the answering service to connect you with the on-call health care provider. She or he can tell you where else EC can be purchased in the community.
- **IF YOUNGER THAN 18:** Call Gannett (255-5155). If it is after business hours, ask the answering service to connect you with the on-call health care provider. She or he can *prescribe EC* over the phone. EC is also available by prescription on a walk-in basis at Gannett when the building is open. Just come in and ask to speak with a nurse.

### Possible side effects

After taking EC, you may experience nausea and/or vomiting. Other possible side effects are abdominal pain or cramps, tender breasts, or headache. These symptoms usually disappear in one or two days.

If you vomit within one hour of taking either dose, call Gannett right away to consult with the on-call healthcare provider. While this is not a serious health threat, the dose of EC may need to be repeated.

### Follow-up after EC

EC can greatly reduce your chance of unplanned pregnancy, but there is still a risk. If a menstrual period does not follow the use of EC within 21 days, return to Gannett or go elsewhere for a pregnancy test.

### EC is not as effective as using contraception on a regular basis.

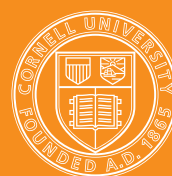
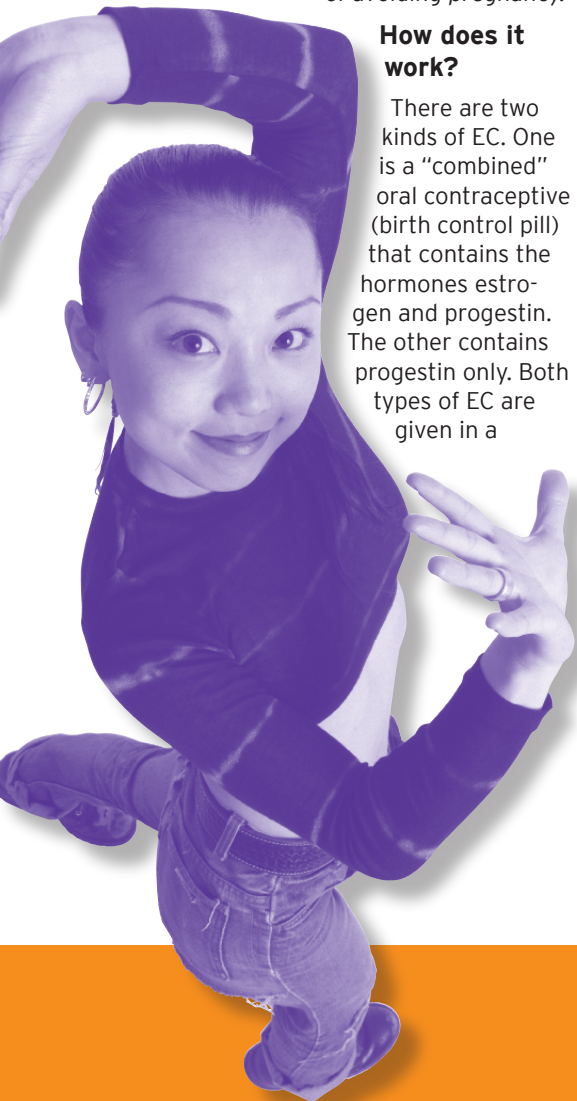
Consider making an appointment with a Clinical Counselor at Gannett to discuss contraceptive options if you need information or would like to change your current contraceptive method.

### Additional considerations

- *EC does not provide ongoing protection.* If you have vaginal intercourse after you use EC pills, you will still need to use contraceptives (e.g. a condom and spermicide) until you get your period. If you were taking birth control pills before, you should continue taking them, but also use a backup method.
- *Neither EC nor any other hormonal birth control prevents sexually transmissible infections (STIs).* Clinicians at Gannett are always available to discuss safer sex options and answer questions about testing for and/or treating sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.
- Some women may request EC after *unwanted or forced sexual contact*. Please talk with us about your needs and concerns. We can provide care, identify resources, and offer support. Cornell's Victim Advocate can be reached on weekdays at 255-1212. You can speak with the on-call nurse at Gannett 24/7.

### Just in case

State and international laws vary regarding the availability of EC (both over-the-counter and by prescription). If you will be leaving campus for a considerable period of time (e.g., summer or winter break, going abroad for a semester), plan ahead. You may want to consider purchasing EC



to have on hand in case of future contraceptive failure or other emergencies. *If you are under 18*, you may request a prescription for EC from a nurse or your clinician. Talk to your health care provider about this option during an annual exam or other medical appointment.

**For more information**

Visit the following websites:

- [ec.princeton.edu/info/ecp.html](http://ec.princeton.edu/info/ecp.html)
- [www.go2planb.com](http://www.go2planb.com)

**Fall and Spring Semester Hours:**

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Monday-Friday	8:30 am-5:00 pm
Saturday	10:00 am-4:00pm
Sunday	building closed

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Check the web for hours during breaks, winter and summer sessions: [www.gannett.cornell.edu](http://www.gannett.cornell.edu)

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e-mail: [gannett@cornell.edu](mailto:gannett@cornell.edu)

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