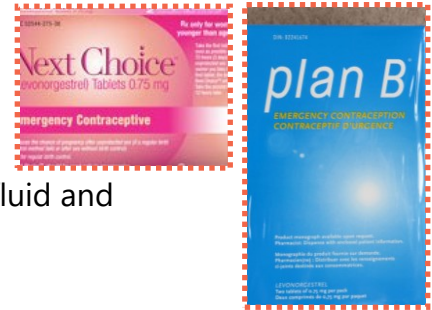


EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION (ECP)

Emergency Contraception (ECP) can help prevent unplanned pregnancies if used as soon as possible (from immediately to within 72 hours) after unprotected sexual activity. The effectiveness decreases with time.

Common brand names include “Plan B” or “Next Choice” (there are also generic brands) and all contain a large dose of levonorgestrel (a progestin) that works similarly to the birth control pill by preventing ovulation, thickening cervical fluid and thinning the lining of the uterus.



Emergency contraception is an over-the-counter medication, no prescription needed (it may be behind the counter) and can be purchased at any drug store, costing anywhere from \$17 - \$45. Emergency contraception is also available from Region of Waterloo Public Health’s [Sexual Health Clinic](#) for \$15.00.

These are some situations where ECP can be used:

- No birth control was used
- Missed birth control pills, patch or ring
- The condom broke, leaked or fell off inside or close to the vagina
- The diaphragm or cervical cap was dislodged or removed too early
- An error was made in the Fertility Awareness Method
- Non-consensual sexual activity (sexual assault)

**ECP is less effective in people over 165 lbs.
ECP may not be effective in people over 175lbs.**

Emergency contraception is intended for *occasional* use. If used frequently an alternative method of birth control is recommended.

The IUD

Another form of emergency contraception is an IUD (intrauterine device). It is inserted by a health care provider into the uterus within 1 week of unprotected sexual activity to prevent pregnancy. This method however, is difficult to achieve as it can cost anywhere between \$60 to \$100 and it may be difficult to get an appointment with a health care provider in the short time frame required.