



Emergency Contraceptives Patient Information

In the United States, there are two FDA approved oral medications available for emergency contraception:

- Plan B® (levonorgestrel)
 - Plan B or other generic versions of the same drug is also available at your local pharmacy, without a prescription.
- ella® (ulipristal acetate)

How do they prevent pregnancy?

- Emergency contraception pills work by preventing or delaying ovulation (the release of an egg from the ovary). Less commonly, emergency contraception may prevent fertilization of the egg by the sperm if ovulation has already happened.
- Emergency contraception works best when you use it as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours after unprotected sex.
- Take Plan B® as soon as possible within three days (or 72 hours) after unprotected sex.
- Take ella® as soon as possible within five days (or 120 hours) after unprotected sex.

Side Effects

- You may experience nausea, abdominal pain, headache (usually subside in 1-2 days).
- Irregular menstrual bleeding: period may be early/late/heavier or lighter than usual
- Less common: breast tenderness, vomiting, diarrhea



Storage Instructions

- Store at room temperature between 15°C and 30°C.
- Protect from light and moisture.
- Do not use medications beyond the printed expiry date.
- Keep away from the reach of children.

please see page 2 for more information

Allegheny County Health Department Public Health Clinic



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Emergency Contraceptives Patient Information *(continued)*

Cautions

- Plan B® may not work as well as ella® in persons who weigh more than 75kg (165lbs), or have a Body Mass Index (BMI) greater than 25 kg/m2.
- Tell your healthcare provider if you have an allergy to levonorgestrel, ulipristal or any component ingredients in the tablet.
- Some medicines may cause Plan B® and ella® to be less effective. Tell your provider if you have used any of the following in the last month:
 - Medicines to treat epilepsy (including primidone, phenobarbital, phenytoin, fosphenytoin, carbamazepine, oxcarbazepine and barbiturates)
 - Medicines to treat tuberculosis (including rifampicin and rifabutin)
 - Medicines to treat HIV (ritonavir, efavirenz, nevirapine)
 - Medicine for fungal infections (griseofulvin)
 - Herbal remedies containing St John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)

Pregnancy and Chest/Breastfeeding

- Emergency contraception is not prescribed if you are pregnant or suspect you may be pregnant. If, however, you take emergency contraceptive medications not knowing they are pregnant, it will not harm the person or the course of the pregnancy.
- Plan B® is safe for individuals who are chest/breastfeeding.
- You should not breastfeed for one week after taking ella®. You can continue to express milk to stimulate and maintain production, but this milk should be thrown away.

Special Instructions

- Use a back-up method (e.g. condoms) for at least 7 days after taking emergency contraception. There is a greater chance of getting pregnant if you have unprotected sex again AFTER taking it, and before your next period.
- If you do not get your menstrual period within 3 weeks of using emergency contraception, please follow up with your healthcare provider; a pregnancy test is recommended.
- Emergency contraception should not be used as a regular contraceptive method.
 - Ongoing hormone contraceptive can be started same day as taking Plan B® or at least 5 days after taking ella®
- Emergency contraception does not protect against sexually transmitted infections.
- If you vomit 2 hours after taking plan B® or 3 hours after taking ella®, please contact a healthcare professional to see if you need another dose.

Safer Sex Practices

1. Use a barrier method (external condoms, internal condoms, or dental dams) to help prevent both STIs and pregnancy.
2. Get tested regularly—even if you feel fine and especially if you have more than one sex partner.
3. Encourage your partners to get tested. Reminder that you are having sex with everyone your partner has had sex with.
4. Avoid cross- contamination and use a fresh condom/barrier between types of sex.
5. Avoid having sex under the influence as it may interfere with your decision-making and make proper safer sex practices more difficult.

