How Effective is Emergency Contraception in Preventing Pregnancy?

The sooner you take Plan B One-Step the better it will work—take it as soon as possible after birth control failure or unprotected sex. If taken within 72 hours (3 days) after unprotected sex it will significantly reduce the risk of pregnancy—7 out of every 8 women who would have gotten pregnancy will not become pregnant. Most women will get their next menstrual period on time or within 1 week of the expected time. If your period is delayed beyond 1 week, or you have severe lower abdominal pain 3 to 5 weeks after taking emergency contraception, you should get a pregnancy test and follow up with a health care professional right away.

Are There Any Side-Effects?

Some women who take Plan B One-Step will have mild, temporary side effects such as:

- nausea
- vomiting
- headache
- fatigue
- dizziness
- breast pain
- lower abdominal discomfort
- breast pain
- menstrual changes.

If you vomit within 2 hours of taking the medication you may need to repeat the dose with a medication to reduce nausea and vomiting. You should not take Plan B One-Step if you are allergic to levonorgestrel, or if you know you are already pregnant (because it won’t work).

W & L Student Health Center
Nurses are available to speak with students about Emergency Contraception 24/7
To make an appointment to see a physician call 458-8401

For more information about emergency contraception you can talk to a health care professional, call the Emergency Contraception Hotline at 1-888-NOT-2-LATE, or go to www.not-2-late.com or www.PlanBOneStep.com.
Emergency Contraception

Emergency Contraception, also known as the morning after pill, is readily available and has been used by women for more than 25 years to help reduce the chance of pregnancy after birth control failure or unprotected sex. Pills can be forgotten, condoms can break (especially if they are exposed to heat, sunlight or oil-based lubricants), alcohol can compromise judgment about using an effective method of contraception for sex, or someone may force or intimidate a woman to have unprotected sex. These are all situations where emergency contraception can be taken to reduce the risk of pregnancy.

How Does It Work?

Plan B One-Step is a single dose of levonorgestrel, a hormone found in birth control pills that can work in a number of ways to prevent pregnancy if taken as soon as possible (within 72 hours) after unprotected intercourse. It works mainly by stopping the release of an egg from the ovary for several days. It may also work by preventing fertilization of an egg (the uniting of sperm with an egg) or by preventing attachment of a fertilized egg to the lining of the uterus. Emergency contraception will not have any effect if you are already pregnant.

How Do I Get Emergency Contraception at W & L?

Plan B One-Step is available at the Student Health Center for emergency contraception—please talk to the nurse on duty if you want to consider taking Plan B One-Step. The nurse will ask you a few brief questions and explain how it works, what to expect, cost, etc. Plan B One-Step is also available at many pharmacies without a prescription for those ages 17 or older—you must request and sign for it at the pharmacy window.