



# Plan B:

Health Services Department, Public Health  
Infectious Diseases Control Division

## Emergency Contraceptive Pills

The risk of pregnancy resulting from a single act of unprotected sexual intercourse ranges from 1 to 30 percent. The Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP) is an emergency measure only. It prevents an unwanted pregnancy resulting from unprotected vaginal intercourse within the past 72 hours. The emergency contraceptive used at York Region Sexual Health clinics is Plan B (a progestin-only pill).

### How Plan B Works

This medication works by preventing ovulation and/or implantation of a fertilized egg. The medication must be taken within 72 hours (preferably within 12 to 24 hours) of unprotected vaginal intercourse to be effective.

1. The ECP will NOT interrupt a pregnancy from a previous act of intercourse.
2. The ECP will NOT protect you from pregnancy for the rest of your cycle.
3. Pregnancies that may be prevented with Plan B:

at 24 hours	95%
at 25 to 48 hours	85%
at 49 to 72 hours	58%
4. If the ECP fails to prevent pregnancy from occurring, it has not been shown to have harmful effects on the development of a fetus. However, you would need to consider how you would choose to deal with a pregnancy if it were to occur.

### Instructions for use

**Method A:** Take one pill as soon as possible and take the second pill in 12 hours.

**Method B:** Only if recommended by your physician, take both pills together as one dose.

Plan B may be taken with food. If you vomit either pill within one hour after taking it, you will need another dose. Call the clinic, your family doctor or go to a walk-in clinic for medical advice.



## Possible Side Effects

You may experience nausea, irregular bleeding/spotting, breast tenderness, headache, stomach pain, cramping, fatigue and/or diarrhea. These are usually temporary.

## When to Expect your Period

The irregular bleeding/spotting you may get with the ECP is not your period. Most women will have their period at the expected time. If your next period is more than one week late or if it is very different from normal, you should have a pregnancy test and a medical assessment.

## Birth Control

The ECP is meant as an emergency treatment. An effective method of birth control (e.g., condom and spermicide, or abstinence) must be used for the remainder of your cycle following ECP treatment.