

Patient Information Regarding Emergency Contraception Pill After Sexual Assault

This information is being given to you following an assault which involved sexual intercourse which could make you pregnant. This information describes a drug which is available for the prevention of pregnancy following this incident. Please read this information carefully, discuss it with the hospital personnel treating you, and ask any questions you have about this drug. You will then be asked to sign a separate form indicating that you fully understand the information provided, and indicating whether you wish to receive or do not wish to receive the drug. If you decide to receive the drug, a prescription will then be provided for you.

What is the Drug and How Does It Work?

The drug is called an Emergency Contraception Pill, or ECP. ECP's contain a combination of hormones that act to prevent pregnancy after intercourse by keeping the ovary from releasing an egg, or by changing the lining of the uterus (womb) so that a fertilized egg cannot attach and develop into a pregnancy. ECP's are like regular birth control pills except that they are taken differently.

ECP's should be started as soon as possible, and definitely no later than three (72 hours) after the incident which could make you pregnant. If this 72-hour window is not met, there may be other options, including use of an IUD within five days (120 hours) of the incident. You should discuss these other options with your doctor immediately if you may need to use them.

What Happens After I Take ECP's?

If you take ECP's as indicated and they are effective, you will not become pregnant from the sexual assault. You must understand that ECP's are not 100% effective. On average, unprotected sexual intercourse will result in pregnancy about 8% of the time (8 times out of 100). With ECP's, this is reduced to about 2% (2 times out of 100).

After taking ECP's, you should see your primary care physician or do a home pregnancy test if your menstrual period does not start within three weeks. If you see a physician for any reason before you get your period, you should tell him or her that you have taken ECP's. You should understand that ECP's are not intended as a long-term birth control method. If you wish to prevent pregnancy from sexual intercourse that has not yet occurred, you should use other methods of birth control. You should use condoms, spermicides, and/or a diaphragm or continue taking certain birth control pills to prevent pregnancy if you have sex before your next period. After that, you can use any regular method of contraception. You should discuss this with your regular doctor if you have questions.

ECP's will not protect you from sexually transmitted diseases.

Are There Any Risks From ECP'S?

ECP's are generally believed to be safe. Some reactions which you may experience include:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Breast tenderness
- Early or late menstrual period

ECP's may not prevent a pregnancy in the tubes or abdomen (ectopic pregnancy), which is a potentially serious condition. If you develop abdominal pain in the first few months after taking the drug, you should see your primary care physician immediately.

Other serious but rare problems have been known to occur with regular, ongoing use of birth control pills. These problems have not been known to occur with use of ECP's but you should ask if you want more information in this regard.

What Other Resources are Available If I am Not Ready to Take ECP's at This Time?

If you decide not to take ECP's at this time but want additional information, you should contact your obstetrician/gynecologist, or if you prefer, you can contact Planned Parenthood or call a toll-free, 24-hour ECP hotline at 1-888-NOT-2LATE. You should make one of these contacts immediately because of the short 72-hour window for use of ECP's.