

Emergency Contraception Facts

- Women of all ages can use emergency contraception to prevent unplanned pregnancy if they have had sex without using contraception or their contraception has failed.
- Many women who have had an unplanned pregnancy did not think to use emergency contraception.
- Emergency contraception is not as effective as regular contraception and it does not prevent pregnancy in every woman.
- There is no evidence to suggest that use of emergency contraception can cause infertility.
- If you are already pregnant, emergency contraceptive pills or the copper coil will not work.
- Emergency contraception does not provide any protection from sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

If you've taken a chance or your contraception has failed, you could be at risk of getting pregnant.

Emergency contraception is more effective the sooner you take it after having unprotected sex.

Long-Term Contraception

Most people use condoms or the pill to avoid unplanned pregnancy.

Increasing numbers of women are now choosing more reliable long-term methods of contraception.

These include;

- **The implant**
- **The injection**
- **The Coil (IUD)**
- **The Hormonal Coil**

These methods are up to 99% effective. Remember a condom is the only method of contraception that can protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

For more information on the best long-term contraceptive choice for you, talk to a pharmacist, GP or Family Planning Clinic.

**For more information visit
www.sexualwellbeing.ie**

Disclaimer

The information in this leaflet has been supplied by the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme in March 2019. The Programme has made every effort to ensure that the information is accurate before going to print.

Please remember that the information in this leaflet does not replace medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

If you have questions or concerns or need further information, visit a pharmacist, GP or Family Planning Clinic for professional advice.



Your Guide To Emergency Contraception





Your Guide To Emergency Contraception

If you've taken a chance or your contraception has failed, you could be at risk of getting pregnant.

What is emergency contraception?

- Emergency contraception is a secondary method or back up contraception.
- You can use it if you want to avoid an unplanned pregnancy after you have had sex without using contraception or if contraception has failed (e.g. the condom slipped or you missed a pill).
- Emergency contraception is more effective the sooner you take it after having unprotected sex.
- Emergency contraception does not provide any protection from sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

It's important that you think about using a regular method of contraception.

For information about contraceptive options visit
www.sexualwellbeing.ie

Emergency contraception is more effective the sooner you take it after having unprotected sex.

Your Emergency Contraception Choices

There are different emergency contraception choices for different situations. Your choice will depend on

- when you had your last period
- how long it has been since you had unprotected sex
- if your contraceptive method failed

Ask a pharmacist for a private consultation or talk to a GP or Family Planning Clinic about the best option for you. You can also use this time to discuss regular contraception.

The following table will give you an outline of the choices available.

	3 Day Pill (levonorgestrel)	5 Day Pill (ulipristal acetate)	The Copper Coil (IUD) (post coital IUD)
Time limit for use after unprotected sex:	72 hours (3 days)	120 hours (5 days)	120 hours (5 days)
Effectiveness:	<p>Is 99% effective. Prevents pregnancy if you take it as soon as possible after you have had unprotected sex. Is less effective on day 2 and day 3.</p> <p>The 3 day pill may be less effective if you have taken the 5 day pill in the same cycle.</p>	<p>Is 99.5% effective. You should take it as soon as possible after you have had unprotected sex.</p> <p>The 5 day pill may be less effective if you have used the 3 day pill in the same cycle or if you are currently taking contraceptive hormones.</p>	<p>Is 99.9% effective. Can be used to stop you becoming pregnant after you have had unprotected sex.</p> <p>It must be inserted any time up to a week before your period.</p> <p>Most doctors prefer to do it within 5 days of unprotected sex.</p> <p>It can be used after you have already taken the 3-day or 5-day pill.</p>
Available:	<p>You can get the 3 day pill directly from your pharmacist.</p> <p>You can also get it on prescription from your GP, an out of hours doctor or a Family Planning Clinic.</p>	<p>You can get the 5 day pill from a pharmacist without a prescription.</p> <p>You can also get it on prescription from your GP, an-out-of-hours doctor or a Family Planning Clinic.</p>	<p>You will need a prescription for the copper coil and it must be inserted by a specially trained GP or a Family Planning clinic.</p>
Works by:	Delaying ovulation	Delaying ovulation	It stops sperm from joining an egg and stops the fertilised egg from attaching to the womb.
Future protection:	<p>After using the 3 day pill it's important to talk to a GP or pharmacist about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what to do if you are already using regular contraception • when you can expect your next period • what to do if your period doesn't come • a regular contraceptive option suitable for you 	<p>After you use the 5 day pill, it's important to talk to a GP or pharmacist about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what to do if you are already using regular contraception • when you can expect your next period • what to do if your period doesn't come • a regular contraceptive option suitable for you 	<p>Usually the IUD will work over the course of 5 years but it can be left in the womb for up to 10 years as a regular method of contraception.</p> <p>This will depend on the type of IUD you have had inserted.</p> <p>The IUD Can be removed if required at your next period.</p>
Remember:	<p>You do not need a prescription to get the 3-day or 5-day pill from a pharmacist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may want to talk to your GP, Family Planning Clinic or pharmacist about which emergency contraception will work best for you. • While you are there, it might be a good time to talk about regular contraception too. • Since 1 July 2017, medical card holders can get emergency contraception directly from a pharmacist, free of charge. • If you do not have a medical card, you will have to pay for the emergency contraception pill and the copper Coil (IUD). 		

Ask a pharmacist for a private consultation or talk to a GP or Family planning clinic about the best option for you.