CHOICES:

Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECPs) (MORNING AFTER PILLS (MAPS)

HAVE YOU EVER IN YOUR LIFE:

- Made love unexpectedly?
- Been forced to have sex?
- Had a condom break, slip or come off?
- Forgotten to take several birth control pills?
- Awakened to realize you were having sex?
- Expected your partner to pull out... but he didn't?
- Found out after sex your diaphragm had slipped?
- Unintentionally let "outercourse" lead to intercourse without proper protection?

If the answer is "yes" to any of the above questions, you should know about emergency contraceptive pills.

Emergency contraception is pregnancy prevention after unprotected sex, suspected contraceptive failure, or rape. Emergency contraceptive pills (ECPs) are two large doses of ordinary birth pills which may be taken within 72 hours after unprotected intercourse to avoid becoming pregnant. Making emergency contraception widely available could cut the number of unintended pregnancies in half and reduce the need for abortion. However, while emergency contraceptive pills prevent most of the pregnancies which follow a single act of intercourse, they are nowhere near as effective as ongoing contraceptives. ***Complete information about emergency contraceptive pills is available through your clinician.***

WHAT ARE THE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE OPTIONS?

- Progestin-only pills (POPs)
  PLAN B: Take 1 pill as soon as possible within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse and 1 pill 12 hours later.
  Ovrette: Take 20 pills as soon as possible within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse and then 20 pills 12 hours later per dose.
- Combined oral contraceptive pills (COCs)
  Preven: Take 2 pills as soon as possible within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse, and 2 more pills 12 hours later. Preven is available in the U.S. with a prescription only.
  Ovral: Take 2 pills as soon as possible within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse and then 2 more pills 12 hours later.
  Levlen, Lo-Ovral, Nordette, or Tri Phasil: Take 4 pills as soon as possible within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse and 4 more pills 12 hours later.
  Alesse: Take 5 pills as soon as possible within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse, and 5 more pills 12 hours later.

- Copper T 380-A IUD insertion for up to 5-8 days after unprotected sex.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES?

- ECPs prevent unwanted pregnancies after forced intercourse, a mistake, or a condom breakage.
- Some women who can't take birth control pills on a regular basis can still use ECPs.
- ECPs prevent abortions and cost less than an abortion.
- They can be obtained and left in your medicine cabinet in case of an emergency such as condom breakage or forced sex.
- **It is not dangerous to use emergency contraceptive pills more than once**, but it is necessary to find an ongoing method of contraception that you will use consistently and correctly.

WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES?

- ECPs cause nausea (in about 50% of women) or vomiting (in about 20% of women). Nausea may be prevented by taking a Dramamine pill one hour before each dose of emergency contraceptive pills.
- ECPs are not as effective as other contraceptives. Also, ECPs are not as effective as inserting a Copper T IUD after unprotected sex.
- ECPs should not be used as your regular contraceptive. However, if you must use ECPs several times, they are not dangerous.
- Except in the state of Washington, you must get a prescription for ECPs from your clinician. They are not available over the counter.
- There's no protection against sexually transmitted infections; you may need to be treated for infection.

WHERE can I get emergency contraceptive pills?

You can go to your clinician or family planning clinic to obtain ECPs. Some clinicians are not familiar with emergency contraception. In this case, **call the toll-free hotline, (1-800) 584-9911 or (1-888) NOT -2- LATE** for phone numbers of clinicians near you who prescribe emergency contraceptive pills. This hotline also provides information about other emergency contraceptive options. Some of these sources of help are free. You can also go to these websites for additional information: www.opr.princeton.edu, www.PREVEN.com, or www.go2planB.com. PLAN B is the emergency contraceptive pill that causes the least nausea, the least vomiting, and has the lowest failure rate.

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Source: Bridging the Gap Foundation, Tiger, GA. Web: www.managingcontraception.com.