# Emergency Contraception Fast Facts *(Customizable)*

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## What is emergency contraception (EC)?

* Emergency contraception (EC) reduces the chance of pregnancy:
  + after unprotected vaginal sex;
  + when a contraceptive method is suspected of failing (e.g., condom breaks or slips off, two or more missed birth control pills); or
  + following sexual assault.
* EC prevents pregnancy **before** it occurs.
* EC is used within 5 days after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy.

## What is it not?

* EC will **not** end an existing pregnancy.
* EC does **not** work if pregnancy has already occurred.
* EC is not the abortion pill, so EC is not impacted by restrictions on abortion.

| **Types of Emergency Contraception** | **Brands** | **Timing of use after sex** | **Reduces pregnancy risk by** | **Requires** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| IUD | *Liletta, Mirena, Paragard* | 5 days | 99% | health care provider to insert |
| Ulipristal acetate (UPA) | *ella®* | 5 days | 85%  (**may be less effective if**  over 194 lbs) | prescription |
| Levonorgestrel | *My Way™, Next Choice™, Plan B One Step™, etc.* | 3−5 days  (**less effective after** 3 days) | 81−90%  (**may be less effective if** over 165 lbs) | no prescription |
| Combined hormonal pills | Many | 5 days | 74% | prescription |

## What else is important to know?

* The sooner EC pills are taken, the more likely they are to work.
* EC pills are not as effective in preventing pregnancy as a birth control method used consistently and correctly.
* EC pills may be prescribed to have on hand before they are needed.

**Detailed information and citations can be found in the** [**Emergency Contraception Facts for Family Planning Staff**](https://rhntc.org/resources/emergency-contraception-facts-family-planning-staff)

[**Job Aid**](https://rhntc.org/resources/emergency-contraception-facts-family-planning-staff) **and the** [**Emergency Contraception (EC) Methods Table**](https://rhntc.org/resources/emergency-contraceptive-ec-methods-table)**.**

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