Post-Coital Hormonal Contraception

Instructions for Use of Plan B®, Plan B® One-Step, Next Choice® One Dose, My Way®, Generic Levonorgestrel and Ella®

Several options for emergency birth control exist for women who have had unprotected sex, been assaulted, or have a birth control method failure: Plan B®, Plan B® One-Step, Next Choice® One Dose, My Way®, generic levonorgestrel, and Ella®. Research suggests that the chance of becoming pregnant after unprotected sex is highest (approximately 25%) about 12 days after your period last began, two days before ovulation occurs. Chances of becoming pregnant after unprotected sex drop to an average of approximately 5% over the rest of the cycle.\(^1\)

Plan B®, Plan B® One-Step, Next Choice® One Dose, My Way®, and generic levonorgestrel (levonorgestrel-based emergency contraceptives) are used for one-time protection in the case of unprotected sex that has occurred within the past 72 hours (3 days). If it has been longer than 72 hours, please contact your doctor. Studies have shown levonorgestrel-based emergency contraceptives to work at least 75% of the time to prevent pregnancy when taken correctly, with one and two-dose products being equally effective.\(^2\) Ella® is used for one-time protection in the case of unprotected sex that has occurred within the past 120 hours (5 days). It greatly reduces the pregnancy rate after unprotected sex and has been found to work as well as levonorgestrel-based emergency contraceptives in recent studies.\(^3,4\) These options are not for everyone. It is important that you discuss all your choices with your health care provider. Levonorgestrel-based emergency contraceptives and Ella® do not protect against HIV (the virus causing AIDS) or any other sexually transmitted disease.

Types of Emergency Contraception:

- **Plan B® (levonorgestrel) and generic levonorgestrel** – Two 0.75 mg tablets – Plan B is available over-the-counter if you are 18 or older and with a prescription if you are 17 or younger. Generic levonorgestrel (0.75 mg) is available over-the-counter if you are 17 or older and with a prescription if you are 16 or younger.
- **Plan B® One Step, Next Choice® One Dose (levonorgestrel), My Way®, and generic levonorgestrel** – One 1.5 mg tablet – Plan B® One-Step is available for purchase over the counter without a prescription regardless of age. Next Choice® One Dose, My Way®, and generic levonorgestrel (1.5 mg) are available over-the-counter if you are 17 or older and with a prescription if you are 16 or younger.
- **Ella® (ulipristal acetate)** – One 30 mg tablet - Available only with a prescription.
You Should Not Use Plan B®, Plan B® One-Step, Next Choice® One Dose, My Way®, or Generic Levonorgestrel (0.75 or 1.5 mg) If You Have Had:

- Blood clots
- Stroke
- Serious liver disease
- Unexplained abnormal vaginal or uterine bleeding
- Known or suspected cancer of the breast or reproductive organs
- Know or suspect that you are already pregnant
- Current use of Coumadin®
- Severe headaches or migraines
- An allergy to levonorgestrel

You Should Not Use Ella® If You:

- Know or suspect that you are already pregnant
- Have had an allergy to ulipristal acetate
- Have already used Ella® within your current menstrual cycle (Ella® should not be used more than once per cycle)

Emergency Contraceptive Use in Overweight or Obese Women:

Levonorgestrel-based emergency contraceptives appear to be less effective in patients who weigh more than 165 pounds, with some research suggesting they may even be ineffective in patients weighing over 176 pounds. Ella® also appears to be less effective in patients weighing over 176 pounds. Women who weigh more than 165 pounds or have a body mass index greater than 25 kg/m² should speak to their doctor to determine which option is best for them.

Using Plan B®, Plan B® One-Step, Next Choice® One Dose, My Way®, and Generic Levonorgestrel (Levonorgestrel-based emergency contraceptives):

1. **Plan B® and Generic Levonorgestrel (Two-Dose):** Take the first tablet (0.75 mg) within 72 hours (it is best to use within 12-24 hours) of unprotected sex. Then, take one more tablet (0.75 mg) 12 hours after your first dose. Your doctor may tell you to take both tablets at once as soon as possible within 72 hours of unprotected sex.

2. **Plan B® One-Step, Next Choice® One Dose, My Way®, and Generic Levonorgestrel (One-Dose):** Take one tablet (1.5 mg) as soon as possible within 72 hours (it is best to use within 12-24 hours) of unprotected sex or a known or suspected birth control failure.

3. Watch for side effects. Common side effects include: nausea, abdominal pain, dizziness, fatigue, headache, breast tenderness, and menstrual changes. Although severe side effects occur rarely, please contact your doctor right away if you experience severe abdominal pain 3-5 weeks after taking the medication. Additionally, if any of the side effects listed below happen to you, please go to the ER right away as they may be signs of a blood clot:
A – Abdominal pain (severe)
C – Chest pain, cough, and shortness of breath
H – Headache (severe), dizziness, weakness, and numbness
E – Eye problems (blurred or changed vision) and speech problems
S – Severe leg pain mainly in calf or thigh

4. You may have some nausea from the medication. In most cases, the nausea is mild. It should stop a day or so after treatment.

   • To decrease the chance of nausea, take with food or milk and avoid fried or spicy foods and the use of alcohol and caffeine. We also suggest that you drink lots of water. Eat bland meals or small snacks.

   • If you vomit within two hours after taking any of these medications, call your health care provider. You may need to take more medication to make up for the medication lost in vomiting. Your health care provider may want to prescribe anti-nausea medicine.

   • Meclizine hydrochloride (Dramamine® Less Drowsy) or diphenhydramine (Benadryl®) can be taken to help decrease nausea and are both available over-the-counter. Meclizine can be taken one hour before emergency contraception. Meclizine may be repeated if needed every 24 hours, and Benadryl® may be repeated every 4-6 hours as needed. The dose for both is one or two 25 mg tablets. Each medication may cause drowsiness. Avoid alcohol or driving while taking these medications.

What to Expect From Plan B®, Plan B® One-Step, Next Choice® One Dose, My Way®, and Generic Levonorgestrel (Levonorgestrel-based emergency contraceptives):

1. After using this medicine, you should have your next period within 7 days of the expected time. If your next period is more than one week late, check with your doctor. You may be pregnant.

2. You may have spotting a few days after using this medicine. With your next period, you may bleed a little more or a little less than usual.

   • Levonorgestrel-based emergency contraceptives have been shown to work well.¹ If your emergency contraceptive does not work and you become pregnant, please contact your doctor. If you want to continue the pregnancy after the use of one of these contraceptives, it is unlikely that any harm will come to the baby. Levonorgestrel-based emergency contraceptives should not be taken if you are already pregnant as they will not work.

   • Fertility is rapid after the use of levonorgestrel-based emergency contraceptives. Hormonal birth control may not work as well during the cycle in which they are used. Barrier-method birth control (such as a condom) is recommended in addition to hormonal birth control after the use of an emergency contraceptive and until the next cycle.
Using Ella®:

1. Take one tablet (30 mg) by mouth as soon as possible within 120 hours (5 days) after unprotected sex or a known or suspected birth control failure.

2. Watch for side effects. Common side effects include: headache, nausea, menstrual changes, abdominal pain, tiredness, and dizziness. Very rarely, a user will develop severe abdominal pain 3-5 weeks after taking Ella®. This is a rare, but severe, side effect of the medication. If you experience this side effect, contact your doctor right away.

3. You may have some nausea from the medication. The nausea is most often mild and should stop a day or so after treatment.
   - To decrease the chance of nausea, take with food or milk and avoid fried or spicy foods and the use of alcohol and caffeine. We also suggest that you drink lots of water. Eat bland meals or small snacks.
   - If you vomit within three hours after taking Ella®, call your health care provider. You may need to take another tablet to make up for the one lost in vomiting. Your health care provider may want to prescribe anti-nausea medicine.
   - Meclizine hydrochloride (Dramamine® Less Drowsy) or diphenhydramine (Benadryl®) can be taken to help decrease nausea and are both available over-the-counter. Meclizine can be taken one hour before emergency contraception. Meclizine may be repeated every 24 hours as needed, and Benadryl® may be repeated every 4-6 hours as needed. The dose for both is one or two 25 mg tablets. Each medication may cause drowsiness. Avoid alcohol or driving while taking these medications.

What to Expect from Ella®

1. Your next period can be early or late, but if it is more than one week late, call your health care provider as you may be pregnant. Bleeding is sometimes heavier or lighter than normal.
   - Ella® should not be taken if you are already pregnant as it will not work.
   - Although Ella® has been shown to work well, if it does not work and you become pregnant, please contact your doctor. If you want to continue the pregnancy after using Ella®, it is unlikely that harm will come to the baby.
   - Fertility is rapid after the use of Ella®. Hormonal birth control may not work as well during the cycle in which Ella® is used. Barrier-method birth control (such as a condom) is recommended in addition to hormonal birth control after the use of Ella® and until the next cycle.
   - Ella® has been shown to be less effective in obese women and those who have additional unprotected sex in the same cycle. Please see section “Emergency Contraceptive Use in Overweight or Obese Women” above for more information.
**Birth Control**

1. Get started right away with an effective ongoing method of birth control. All women who continue to be sexually active should start effective contraception immediately after using an emergency contraceptive. Plan B®, Plan B® One-Step, Next Choice® One Dose, My Way®, generic levonorgestrel, and Ella® are meant only for a one-time protection and do not replace routine birth control.

2. You will be given information on methods of birth control. These methods include non-prescription methods such as condoms and spermicidal products (creams, film, foams, gels, and suppositories). Prescription methods include birth control pills, the diaphragm, or cervical caps (caps are recommended to be used with a spermicidal product). If you choose a prescription method of birth control, an appointment will be made with a health care provider. This visit will include a complete exam including a pap smear and pelvic exam.

3. Barrier contraceptives such as condoms, diaphragms, or cervical caps are recommended in addition to hormonal birth control immediately following the use of an emergency contraceptive and during the same menstrual cycle. Regular birth control may not work as well during this cycle.

4. **Future Care**

It is recommended that women have their first pap smear within three years of becoming sexually active or at age 21, whichever occurs first, and every two years after that. Women should still continue to receive annual pelvic exams, regardless of whether or not they have received the HPV vaccine. 

If you have further questions or problems, please contact the ______________________ Clinic at (608) ___________________. Ask to talk with a nurse.
References:


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Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©7/2014. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4412.