

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION – PROGESTIN ONLY

The **Plan B** brand of emergency contraception is a medication containing a synthetic progestin which is taken in order to attempt to prevent a possible pregnancy.

Before taking it you need to give an accurate medical and sexual history to your health care provider, and be evaluated by her or him.

This medication reduces the risk of pregnancy following a single act of unprotected intercourse. Depending on the exact time in the menstrual cycle, the pregnancy rate following a single act of unprotected intercourse may be 0 to 33%. (On average, it is 8%.) After taking emergency contraception, the pregnancy rate is 0 to 8%. (On average it is 1%.) This represents a 75-90% reduction in risk of pregnancy for this single act of unprotected intercourse. This medication is not 100 per cent effective.

This medication is thought to work in most cases by preventing or delaying ovulation. If ovulation does occur, the medication may prevent implantation of a fertilized ovum into the uterine lining. This medication will not prevent pregnancies resulting from sexual intercourse occurring after you have taken it. Your risk of pregnancy may actually be increased if you have unprotected intercourse in the week following emergency contraception.

This is not a method of birth control that can be used repeatedly or long-term. You can obtain information about and access to methods that can be used for pregnancy prevention from now on from your health care provider.

There may be some side effects from this medication. These may include nausea, abdominal pain, fatigue, headache, breast tenderness, and dizziness. It is very unlikely that you would have any serious side effects, but you should contact the Gyn Student Health Clinic if you have severe abdominal, chest or leg pain, or severe headache, or problems with your vision.

If this method fails and you do become pregnant, there is a *theoretical* risk that this or any medication you may have taken since conception could harm the developing fetus. However, there is no *proven* risk to a developing fetus from the hormones in emergency contraception.