

## How Does Plan B Work?

Plan B may work in one of these ways, depending upon where you are in your cycle:

- It may prevent or delay ovulation.
- It may interfere with fertilization of an egg.

Plan B is not the same as RU-486, which is an abortion pill. It does not cause a miscarriage or abortion. In other words, it does not stop development of a fetus once the fertilized egg implants in the uterus. So it will not work if you are already pregnant when you take it.

## How to Take Plan B

Plan B can be purchased over the counter at drugstores without a prescription or proof of age. Because it is most effective when taken as soon as possible (up to 72 hours after sex), consider having a ready supply in your medicine cabinet.

You can take Plan B if:

- You didn't use any birth control.
- The condom came off or broke.
- The diaphragm slipped out of place.
- You missed at least two active birth control pills
- You forgot to insert your ring or apply your patch.
- Your partner didn't pull out in time.
- You have a reason to think your birth control might not have worked.
- You were forced to have sex.

**Remember:** Plan B will not protect you from getting pregnant if you have sex *after* taking the pills. Instead, you need to take it right after you have unprotected sex.

Do not take Plan B if:

- You know you are pregnant or suspect you might be.
- You have a history of allergy to its ingredients.
- You weigh over 165 pounds.

## What is Plan B?

Plan B is a type of emergency contraception. This is birth control that can prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex. It is sometimes called the "morning after pill." You don't have to wait until the morning after sex to take it, in fact, Plan B is more effective the sooner you take it.

## Effectiveness

If you take Plan B within 24 hours after you've had unprotected sex it is about 95% effective, and taken within 72 hours, it can reduce the risk of pregnancy by up to 89%. It should be taken as soon as possible.

But you should know that Plan B is not as effective as regular contraception. It is not meant to be taken as your main form of birth control. And, it does not protect you against sexually transmitted diseases. Think of it as a backup -- that's why it's called Plan B.

Also, research shows that Plan B starts to lose its effectiveness in women heavier than 165 pounds and is not recommended for anyone over this weight.

## Side Effects

Many women have taken Plan-B without serious complications and it is considered safe for most women. But it's a good idea to ask your doctor about possible interactions with other medications. You should not take it if you are pregnant, as it will not end the pregnancy. Potential side effects include nausea, abdominal pain, fatigue, headache, menstrual changes, dizziness, breast tenderness, and vomiting. You may also have some unexpected bleeding. If you don't get your period within three weeks, get a pregnancy test to make sure you're not pregnant.