

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION: A GUIDE FOR PHARMACIES AND RETAILERS (JUNE 2015)

What is emergency contraception (also known as “the morning-after pill”)?

- Emergency contraception (EC) prevents pregnancy; EC will not disrupt an existing pregnancy.
- EC pills that contain the progestin hormone, levonorgestrel (LNG), are sold under several names. Most levonorgestrel EC products are available over-the-counter (OTC) without age restrictions. (See reverse side for specific medication details.)
- EC pills that contain ulipristal acetate are available and are prescription only.
- All EC works best when taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex but may be effective up to 5 days after.
- EC is safe for women of all ages to use.

What are the restrictions for purchasing EC over-the-counter? Do customers need to show ID?

- For the one-pill LNG EC products containing one 1.5 mg levonorgestrel pill (brand and generics), there are NO age or point-of-sale restrictions. Previously, OTC purchases were subject to age restrictions, but these have been removed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and most brands have updated their labels to reflect the new regulations.
 - Any woman or man of any age can purchase these EC products without needing to show ID.
 - There is no limit on the number of packages that a person can purchase.
 - Although some of the generic one-pill product labels state that the product is intended for women aged 17 and older, this is not a restriction on sale (no ID required); it is guidance for the consumer only.
- For the two-pill LNG EC products containing two 0.75 mg levonorgestrel pills, there are still age restrictions and these must be kept behind the pharmacy counter. A pharmacy staff member must check ID to ensure the person purchasing the product is age 17 or older, but a pharmacist consultation is not required.

Can men purchase LNG EC?

- Yes, men can purchase over-the-counter LNG EC. There are no sex/gender restrictions on the sale of any over-the-counter products. However, prescriptions for EC can only be issued to the patient who will be taking it.

Where can EC be found within pharmacies and stores?

- Pharmacies and retailers can sell one-pill LNG EC products directly from store shelves as long as the products have updated OTC packaging.
 - Most retailers stock it in the family planning aisle so it can be found easily.
 - There is no need for these EC products to be kept behind the pharmacy counter.
- Two-pill LNG EC products must still be stocked behind the pharmacy counter. The customer can purchase the product without a prescription if they are at least 17 years old. Patients aged 16 or younger will need a prescription. Some states may have protocols that allow the pharmacist to provide a prescription directly to patients.
 - You may consider removing these products from your stock unless they are cheaper than the one-pill products. The one-pill product is easier for patients to take and there's no chance of not taking the second pill at the right time.
- Ulipristal acetate is available by prescription only so it must be kept behind the pharmacy counter. Some states may have protocols that allow the pharmacist to provide a prescription directly to patients.

Why is it important to stock one-pill LNG EC on the shelf?

- EC is a woman's last chance to prevent an unintended pregnancy after birth control failure, sexual assault, or unprotected sex.
- EC works best when it's taken as soon as possible. Convenient and timely access is critically important.
- Keeping EC behind the counter is an unnecessary and harmful barrier; FDA has approved these EC products to be sold on store shelves without any restrictions.
- Customers may feel embarrassed about purchasing EC; placing it directly on the shelf without locked security boxes protects people's privacy and confidentiality.
- Pharmacies and stores have an important role to play in helping women prevent unintended pregnancy by maintaining a stock of easily accessible EC on the shelf at all times.

What can I do if my store doesn't stock one-pill LNG EC on the shelf?

- If you are the person who makes stocking decisions, you can make space for EC in the family planning aisle.
- If your store doesn't sell EC on the shelf, it may be because the regulations around EC have changed frequently in the past few years, and it can be confusing. Share these guidelines with your management and encourage them to stock EC on the shelf.
- If you cannot fulfill a customer's request for EC, please refer them to Not-2-Late's EC locator: www.not-2-late.com.

FDA-APPROVED EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE PILLS AS OF JUNE 2015

Under current regulations, the medications listed below should be made available in the following ways:

MEDICATION	INFORMATION
<p>Brand and Generic <u>One-Pill</u> Levonorgestrel EC Products</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be stocked on OTC shelves in stores. • Label may indicate that the product is intended for use by women ages 17 and older, but ID check is <u>not</u> required. • Take as soon as possible; may be effective up to 5 days after unprotected sex. • 1 tablet (1.5 mg levonorgestrel)
<p>Generic <u>Two-Pill</u> Levonorgestrel EC Product</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Must</u> be stocked behind the pharmacy counter. • Prescription required for those 16 years and younger. Available for purchase over-the-counter for those 17 and older. • Only EC product that is currently "dual labeled" for prescription and OTC usage. • Take both pills together as soon as possible; may be effective up to 5 days after unprotected sex. • 2 tablets (each 0.75 mg levonorgestrel)
<p>Ulipristal acetate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Must</u> be stocked in the pharmacy as a prescription-only drug. • Available for purchase by prescription at the pharmacy and online. • Only EC product labeled for prescription use only. • Take as soon as possible; effective up to 5 days after unprotected sex. • 1 tablet (30 mg ulipristal acetate)

If you have questions or want to share comments about how EC is sold at your store, contact us:
asec@americansocietyforec.org.

Learn more about EC at www.not-2-late.com and www.rhtp.org.