Can I get emergency contraception (aka “EC” or “the morning after pill”)?

You can take EC to prevent pregnancy after unprotected or unwanted sex. There are several types of EC products available.

- Plan B One-Step® contains a strong dose of the same hormones in regular birth control pills. It is available on pharmacy shelves and can be purchased by women or men, with no ID or age requirement.
- The generic version of Plan B One-Step®, NextChoice™, is available from pharmacies without a prescription for young women and young men ages 17 or older. Those under 17 will need a prescription. Girls under 17 can get these products from a health care provider or at Planned Parenthood.

Plan B and NextChoice work best 12 hours after sex but can work up to three days after sex.

ellaOne® has a different active ingredient than other EC products. It works up to five days after unprotected sex or sexual assault and requires a prescription from a health care provider.

How can I get a pregnancy test?

You do not need a prescription from a health care provider to get a pregnancy test. You can purchase a pregnancy test from a drugstore, grocery store, or online. They cost between $10 and $18. You can also get a pregnancy test at a clinic.

Where can I get condoms?

You can get condoms for free at most clinics but you can also purchase them at any drug store regardless of how old you are. Condoms cost between $5–$20 per box.

How can I talk about condom use and contraception with my partner?

It can be hard to talk to a partner about condoms and contraception. But unprotected sex puts you both at risk. Here are a few tips to make the conversation a success:

- Know what you want and don’t want. Don’t engage in any sexual behavior that makes you uncomfortable, but always protect yourself. Remember, the more you engage in safer sex practices, the less your risk of STIs and pregnancy.
- Discuss abstinence, sex, and safer Sex. Be honest about your sexual history and your sexual health. Discuss and make mutual decisions on your safer sex options. Go together to get tested for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Educate yourself about safer sex options and make sure you are prepared to discuss them.

State what you want, and don’t want, clearly. Don’t be afraid! You have the right to protect yourself and to state your needs. If your partner doesn’t respond in a supportive way, think about the relationship as a whole and if your partner respects and cares about you. No one should ever ask you to compromise your health and well-being!

Advocates for Youth

Established in 1980 as the Center for Population Options, Advocates for Youth champions efforts to help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health. Advocates believes it can best serve the field by boldly advocating for a more positive and realistic approach to adolescent sexual health.

If you would like more information about contraceptive access or methods of contraception, visit www.amplifyyourvoice.org/issues/contraceptiveaccess

Check out Advocates for Youth’s websites:

- Advocates for Youth www.advocatesforyouth.org
- Amplify An online youth activism hub with information, resources, and advocacy opportunities www.amplifyyourvoice.org
- MySistahs Information and support by and for young women of color www.mysistahs.org
- YouthResource Information by and for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth www.youthresource.org

Advocates for Youth shall not be liable for any direct, indirect, incidental, consequential, or any other damages resulting from the use of the information contained herein.
PREVENTING PREGNANCY AND STDs, INCLUDING HIV

the only methods you can use that prevent pregnancy
AND reduce the risk of STDs, including HIV:

abstinence

100% EFFECTIVE
in preventing pregnancy and STDs, including HIV
when used consistently and correctly every time

male condom

98% EFFECTIVE
against pregnancy, 99% EFFECTIVE against HIV, and also reduces the risk of many other STDs when used consistently and correctly every time

female condom

95% EFFECTIVE
against pregnancy and may reduce the risk of STDs, including HIV, when used consistently and correctly every time

MORE EFFECTIVE
Less than 1/100 women will get pregnant in one year using these methods

IUD

implant

GET REPEAT INJECTIONS ON TIME.

TAKE A PILL EACH DAY.

KEEP IN PLACE, CHANGE ON TIME.

Depo; the Shot

pills

ring

patch

With typical use, less than 8/100 women will get pregnant in one year using these methods

WHEN USED CORRECTLY EVERY TIME LESS THAN 1/100 WOMEN WILL GET PREGNANT USING THESE METHODS IN ONE YEAR

less than 1/100

women will get pregnant in one year using these methods

Depo; the Shot

pills

With typical use, between 15/100 and 21/100 women will get pregnant in one year using these methods

WHEN USED CORRECTLY EVERY TIME BETWEEN 15/100 AND 21/100 WOMEN WILL GET PREGNANT USING THESE METHODS IN ONE YEAR

between 15/100 and 21/100

women will get pregnant in one year using these methods

male condom

diaphragm

female condom

sponge

cervical cap

WHEN USED CORRECTLY EVERY TIME BETWEEN 15/100 AND 21/100 WOMEN WILL GET PREGNANT USING THESE METHODS IN ONE YEAR

Between 15/100 and 21/100

women will get pregnant in one year using these methods

spermicide

withdrawal

WHEN USED CORRECTLY EVERY TIME WOMEN WILL GET PREGNANT USING THESE METHODS IN ONE YEAR

85/100 women will get pregnant in one year using no method

vaginal-penile sex without protection

PREVENTING PREGNANCY

METHODS YOU CAN USE TO PREVENT PREGNANCY

How well do they work?

FIND A METHOD YOU LIKE AND STICK WITH IT.

Two methods are better than one (for example a condom and the patch or a condom and the pill).

Remember to use your protection method each and every time you have sex.

Both you and your partner are responsible for protection.

Sources: Comparing effectiveness of birth control methods http://www.plannedparenthood.org; Contraceptive Options 2008 Bridging the Gap Communications, Inc.


Find a method you like and stick with it.