

## If it does not work ...

If you have used emergency contraception, but become pregnant anyway, you will need to decide whether you want to continue the pregnancy or to have an abortion. If you have taken the emergency contraceptive pill, which should be taken within 120 hours of having unprotected intercourse, and you are still pregnant, it is important that you tell your doctor. If you have taken the emergency contraceptive pill, which should be taken within 72 hours of having unprotected intercourse, the foetus is unharmed.

A copper IUD (coil) will not harm the foetus either. However, the IUD should be removed immediately if you decide to continue the pregnancy – or you will risk having a miscarriage later.

# COPPER INTRAUTERINE DEVICE (IUD)

A copper IUD, or coil, is a little plastic "skeleton" wrapped in copper wire. The copper IUD affects the uterus, so that fertilised eggs, if any, cannot become implanted and grow. The method is very effective, and has about a 98% chance of preventing pregnancy.

The IUD is inserted into the uterus as quickly as possible – and no more than 5 days after having intercourse. Doctors are the only ones allowed to insert an IUD.

## PROS AND CONS OF COPPER IUDs

- + When you have a copper IUD, you have a 98% chance of not becoming pregnant.
- + The copper IUD will not affect your cycle..
- + The IUD can subsequently be left in place so that it can be used as a normal form of contraception.
- The IUD can fall out.
- The IUD almost always causes heavier menstrual bleeding. It may also cause cramping in connection with menstruation.
- The IUD can slightly increase your risk of pelvic infection (increased discharge and pain).
- The IUD does not protect you from sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV or chlamydia.

### For more information, please visit:

- [www.præventionsguide.dk](http://www.præventionsguide.dk)
- [www.abortnet.dk](http://www.abortnet.dk)
- [www.sexsygdomme.dk](http://www.sexsygdomme.dk)

### Advisory services for young people

For advice on emergency contraception, please call the Sexlinien for Unge (youth helpline) attel. no. 70 20 22 66 (Monday to Friday, 3 p.m. – 7 p.m.) or visit the [www.sexlinien.dk](http://www.sexlinien.dk) website (In Danish)

If you are between 10-15 years old, you can get more information by contacting Privatsnak (Private talk) at tel. no. 70 20 22 81 (Monday to Friday, 3 p.m. – 7 p.m.) or by visiting [www.privatsnak.dk](http://www.privatsnak.dk) (In Danish)

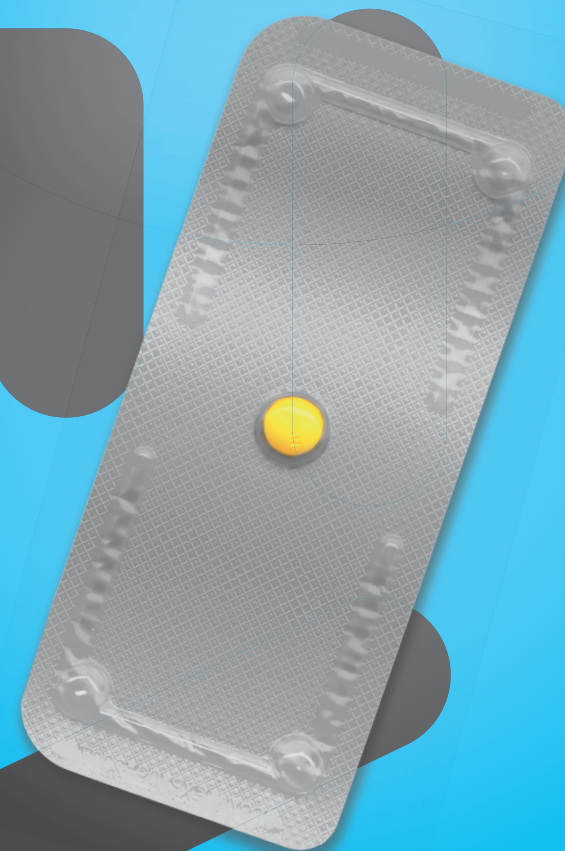
### Sex & Samfund (Danish Family Planning Association)

Lergravsvej 59, 2. th, 2300 Kbh. S  
Tel. no. 33 93 10 10

Sex & Samfund works to strengthen the opportunities of all individuals to make free and informed choices about sexuality, sexual health, contraception and abortion.

# EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

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# SEX SAMFUND

# EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

Emergency contraception is a method used to prevent pregnancy after having unprotected intercourse.

There are three ways to prevent pregnancy after having unprotected intercourse:

1. An emergency contraceptive pill (i.e. the "morning after pill"), which is to be taken within 72 hours (3 days) of having intercourse.
2. An emergency contraceptive pill, which can be taken within 120 hours (5 days) of having intercourse.
3. A copper intrauterine device (IUD) or coil, which can be inserted within 5 days of having intercourse.

## Where can you go to get emergency contraception or an IUD?

- ➔ You can buy emergency contraceptive pills without a prescription at the chemist's.
- ➔ If the chemist's is closed, you can buy the pill at a 24-hour chemist's shop, or buy/get one from your GP or from a doctor from the emergency service.
- ➔ The intrauterine device (IUD) can be bought from your GP.
- ➔ You can buy emergency contraceptive pills and IUDs at contraceptive clinics. The clinics are located throughout the country.

## Two types of emergency contraceptive pills

There are two types of emergency contraceptive pills. Both of them can be bought without a prescription and consist of a single pill. The first type contains a specific hormone (progestogen), while the second type contains a drug called ulipristal. The two types of pill are not to be taken together.

Both pills can delay or prevent ovulation, which in turn prevents conception. The lining of the uterus is also affected, so that fertilised eggs, if any, are unable to become implanted. Used correctly, the emergency contraceptive pills reduce the risk of pregnancy by 58-98%.

## How to use the emergency contraceptive pill

Once you get the pill, you should do the following:

- ➔ Read the package insert thoroughly.
- ➔ Take the pill as quickly as possible after having unprotected intercourse.

*Emergency contraception within 72 hours* should be taken as quickly as possible, and not later than 72 hours after having intercourse. The effect of the pill falls with time, so it is important to take it as quickly as possible. The emergency contraceptive can cause nausea, which can be reduced by taking the pill with a meal. If you throw up within three hours of taking the pill, you should take a new pill immediately.

*Emergency contraception within 120 hours* should be taken as quickly as possible, and not later than 120 hours after having intercourse. The pill's effect is consistent throughout the 120 hour time period. If you throw up within three hours of taking the pill, you should take a new pill immediately.

**Remember:** If you need emergency contraception, you may also have been infected with a sexually transmitted disease such as chlamydia. You should therefore be tested for such diseases three weeks after having unprotected intercourse.

## When do you know if you are pregnant?

It is not immediately clear if the pill has worked, or not. Your next menstruation can arrive before or after you expect it to take place – depending on where you were in your cycle when you took the emergency contraceptive pill.

Regardless of when you get your next menstruation, you should take a pregnancy test three weeks after you have taken the emergency contraceptive pill. You can take a test at your doctor's office or with the help of a home pregnancy test.

## How often can emergency contraceptive pills be used?

Emergency contraceptive pills should not be used as contraception. Contraceptive methods such as condoms, birth control pills, contraceptive patches, vaginal rings and IUDs are much more effective – and have no or few side effects.

As a rule, you should only use emergency contraceptive pills once between two menstruations. However, if you find yourself in a situation where you need it, it is better to take emergency contraception more than once during this period, instead of running the risk of having an unwanted pregnancy. If you take emergency contraception more than once, your risk of irregular bleeding is increased.

# PROS AND CONS OF EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE PILLS

- + Emergency contraception can be bought without a prescription.
- + Emergency contraception can be used as extra security against pregnancy – e.g. if a condom breaks.
- + Emergency contraception can be bought ahead of time, so you always have a package handy.
- Emergency contraception that is to be taken within 72 hours of having unprotected intercourse loses its effect quickly. If you take the pill up to 24 hours after intercourse, its efficacy is about 95%. Between 24-48 hours, it is about 85% and between 48-72 hours, it is about 58%.
- The two kinds of emergency contraception must not be taken together.
- Emergency contraception that is to be taken within 120 hours of having unprotected intercourse can reduce the effect of other forms of hormone-based contraception, so until you have your next menstruation, you still need to use a condom when having sexual intercourse.
- Emergency contraception that is to be taken within 120 hours of having unprotected intercourse is not advised if you have advanced liver disease.
- Emergency contraception (both kinds) does not protect you against sexually transmitted diseases.
- Emergency contraception (both kinds) can cause irregular bleeding, and your next menstruation may come earlier or later than expected.
- A small number of women can experience nausea and vomiting, breast tenderness, dizziness and headaches in connection with these pills. These side effects usually disappear within 48 hours.

**An emergency contraceptive pill does not protect you against pregnancy if you have unprotected sex after taking the pill**