

# MCLA Health Services

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Self Care Sheet

Emergency Contraception

MCLA Health Services encourages couples to consider in advance how they will protect themselves against undesired pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. We understand that plans sometimes fail. Following unprotected intercourse a woman may choose to accept the possibility of pregnancy or she may wish to reduce the likelihood of pregnancy and choose emergency contraception.

Emergency contraception is available if you had intercourse and the condom broke, you have forgotten to take your birth control pill a few times this pill pack or you did not use protection. Plan B® is a FDA approved emergency contraception, it is not an abortion pill. Plan B® works by inhibiting or delaying ovulation, preventing fertilization or implantation of the fertilized egg. It prevents pregnancy from occurring but won't work if you are already pregnant. Emergency contraception is just that **for emergencies** and is not to be used as your regular birth control and it **does not** protect you from sexually transmitted infections.

## How do I know when I should take Emergency Contraception?

- ⇒ The risk of pregnancy with any unprotected intercourse is up to 30% and is highest at midcycle.
- ⇒ If you had a contraception failure or unprotected sexual intercourse Plan B® will prevent unplanned pregnancy. It will not affect an already fertilized egg attached to the uterus.
- ⇒ The sooner you take Plan B® the more effective it is. Plan B® can reduce your chance of pregnancy by up to 89%.
- ⇒ Plan B® should not be used as your regular birth control method. It is not as effective as other methods of birth control.
- ⇒ Plan B® does not protect you from HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STI). If you have had unprotected intercourse you should consider STI testing.
- ⇒ **Plan B® is available to female MCLA students through Health Services only one time per semester.** It is available at any pharmacy without a prescription for individuals over age 18. Anyone under age 18 requires a prescription which can be obtained through Health Services.
- ⇒ Health Services offers a GYN appointment for women wishing to discuss effective, continuous methods of contraception and STI protection.

## Prevention

- ⇒ Before having intercourse discuss with your partner how you will both protect yourself from STI's and pregnancy.
- ⇒ If you choose to have sex use a condom every time and correctly. Use a water soluble lubricant inside (just a few drops) and out side to reduce friction and decrease the chance of breakage.
- ⇒ Alcohol can impair your sexual decision making and besides sex is safer and better if sober.
- ⇒ Abstinence is the best prevention against pregnancy and STI's.
- ⇒ Don't be pressured into doing something you do not want to do, are not ready to do or are not protected when you do have intercourse.

**Follow up at Health Services for further evaluation, treatment and information.**