

## Where can I get emergency contraception?

Emergency contraception pills are available from a chemist without a script or Family Planning NT.

Most women can take the ECP but it is important to tell your pharmacist or doctor about any medical conditions and allergies you have as well as medications or herbal medications you are taking.

The copper IUD is more difficult to obtain. Ring your GP or Family Planning clinic.

Remember emergency contraception only helps to prevent pregnancy from the unprotected sex you have just had.

For long acting contraception contact your GP or Family Planning clinic.



For further information please call:  
ph: (08 ) 89480144  
or  
visit [www.fpwnt.com.au](http://www.fpwnt.com.au)

**Family Planning Welfare Association of NT  
Head Office — Darwin**  
Unit 2, The Clock Tower,  
Dick Ward Drive  
Coconut Grove.  
ph: 08 8948 0144

**Palmerston Clinic**  
ph: 08 8948 0144

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updated May 2021 Acknowledgement to FPNSW

**Family Planning**  
Welfare Association of NT Inc.

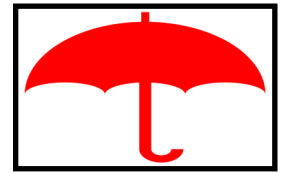
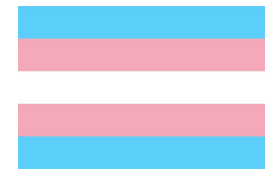
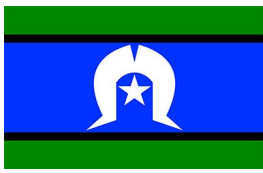
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# Emergency Contraception



## MISSION STATEMENT

*Family Planning Welfare Association of NT Inc will advocate for and provide enhanced reproductive and sexual health and well being to all Territorians. This will be achieved through the provision of best practice clinical care and contemporary education and information services.*



### What is emergency contraception?

Emergency contraception is used after unprotected sex. You may decide to use EC if:

- you didn't use any contraception
- you had sex with a condom and it broke
- you forgot to take your contraceptive pill
- you were sexually assaulted

### What emergency contraception is available in Australia?

There are three EC types available:

- Levonorgestral emergency contraceptive pill. ~Available without a script from the chemist.
- Ulipristal acetate emergency contraceptive pill. ~Available without a script from the chemist.
- Copper intrauterine device (IUD). ~Inserted within 5 days of unprotected sex by a trained Doctor. Please note in the NT this method may be difficult to obtain.

### How does emergency contraception work?

Emergency contraception pills (ECP's) work by stopping or delaying the release of an egg from a woman's ovary.

~ECP's do not cause an abortion.

~ECP's do not cause harm if you accidentally take them when you are already pregnant.

The copper IUD mainly works by interfering with sperm movement, which stops sperm fertilising an egg. Sometimes it works by preventing implantation of a fertilised egg, but it has no effect after implantation. The copper IUD does not cause an abortion.

### When do I use emergency contraception.

ECP's work better the sooner you take them.

- Levonorgestral pill should be taken within 72 hours (3 days) after unprotected sex. It might still have some effect up to 96 hours ( 4 days). It can be used more than once in a cycle.
- Ulipristal acetate pill should be taken within 120 hours ( 5 days) after unprotected sex.

Levonorgestrel pill should not be used in the same menstrual cycle as ulipristal acetate.

You may feel sick after taking ECP's, if you vomit within 2 hours of taking the levonorgestrel pill or 3 hours after taking the ulipristal acetate, then it might not work so it is recommended to take another pill.

### How effective is Emergency contraception?

ECP's prevent about 85% of expected pregnancies. They work best when taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex.

The copper IUD is the most effective emergency contraception, with more than 99% effectiveness.

Remember, no method of emergency contraception is 100% effective at preventing pregnancy and don't protect you against sexually transmitted infections.

### Side effects? Periods?

Emergency contraception is very safe with no serious or long-lasting side-effects. Some short term side effects such as breast tenderness, nausea and headache have been reported.

Your period should return at the usual time but sometimes your next period can start earlier or later than expected.

You should do a pregnancy test if you period is late more than a week, is lighter than normal or you have any unusual bleeding.

### Emergency Contraception and Breast Feeding?

You can continue to breast feed when you take the levonorgestrel emergency contraception pill.

Women who choose the ulipristal acetate pill are advised to express the breast milk and throw it away for one week after.

Breast feeding women may prefer to use the levonorgestrel pill or copper IUD method.