

## EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION: A GUIDE FOR PHARMACIES AND RETAILERS (OCT 2018)

### 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 as Plan B One-Step®, Take Action™, My Way™, Aftera®, and others. One-pill LNG EC products are available over-the-counter (OTC) without age restrictions. (See reverse side for specific product details.)
- Two-pill LNG EC products are no longer sold in the U.S.
- EC pills containing ulipristal acetate (UPA) are sold under the brand name ella® and are prescription only.
- EC pills work best if taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex but may work 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?

- There are no age or point-of-sale restrictions on the OTC purchase of 1.5 mg LNG EC products (Plan B One-Step and generic equivalents). Previous age restrictions have been removed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- Any woman or man of any age can purchase LNG EC products without needing to show ID.
  - There is no limit on the number of packages that a person can purchase.
  - Until recently, some generic LNG EC product labels stated “for women 17 years and older”. If your store’s products still carry this labeling, be aware that this is not an enforceable restriction.

### Where can EC be found within pharmacies and stores?

- LNG EC products can be sold directly from store shelves.
  - Most retailers stock it in the family planning aisle so it can be found easily.
  - There is no need to keep these EC products only behind the pharmacy counter.
- Ulipristal acetate (ella) is available by prescription only. Some states have protocols that allow the pharmacist to write a prescription for various EC products.

### Why is it important to stock LNG EC on the over-the-counter shelf?

- EC provides a 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 pharmacy counter is an unnecessary and harmful barrier; the FDA has approved LNG EC products for sale on store shelves without any restrictions.
- Customers may feel embarrassed about purchasing EC; placing it directly on the shelf without locked security cabinets or boxes protects people’s privacy and confidentiality.
- Pharmacies and stores have an important role to play in helping people prevent unintended pregnancy by maintaining a stock of easily accessible EC on the shelf at all times.

### Can men purchase LNG EC?

- Yes, men can purchase LNG EC. There are no sex/gender restrictions on the sale of OTC EC products.
- Prescriptions for EC (for women using ella or who want/need a prescription for LNG EC for insurance reimbursement) can only be issued to the patient who will be taking it.

### What can I do if my store doesn’t stock LNG EC on the over-the-counter shelf?

- If you are the person who makes stocking decisions, you make space for EC in the family planning aisle.
- If your store doesn’t sell EC on the OTC 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 OTC 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](http://www.not-2-late.com).

## FDA-APPROVED EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE PILLS (AS OF OCT 2018)

### Levonorgestrel EC\*



<b>Formulation</b>	• Levonorgestrel 1.5 mg
<b>Where to stock</b>	• On OTC shelves; does <u>not</u> need to be stocked behind the pharmacy counter
<b>Regulatory status</b>	• OTC for all ages for women and men: ID check is <u>not</u> required
<b>How to use</b>	• Take as soon as possible; may be effective up to 5 days after unprotected sex
<b>Cost</b>	• ~\$50 for branded product (Plan B One-Step) • ~\$35-40 for generics (Aftera, Take Action, My Way, and others) • Should be covered by insurance with prescription
<b>Good to know</b>	• May be less effective for women who weigh more than 165 lbs • Preferable for women who need EC due to missed or late pills, patch or ring

\*Additional generic products may be available

### Ulipristal Acetate EC



<b>Formulation</b>	• Ulipristal acetate 30 mg
<b>Where to stock</b>	• Behind the pharmacy counter on the pharmacy shelves
<b>Regulatory status</b>	• Prescription-only
<b>How to use</b>	• Take as soon as possible; may be effective up to 5 days after unprotected sex • Don't start a hormonal method within 5 days of unprotected sex after taking ella
<b>Cost</b>	• ~\$50 • Should be covered by insurance
<b>Good to know</b>	• More effective than LNG for women who weigh more than 165 lbs • Not recommended for women who need EC due to missed or late birth control pills, patch or ring due to a theoretical drug interaction • Starting hormonal birth control immediately after ella may make it ineffective

If you have questions or comments about how EC is sold at your store, contact ASEC:

[asec@american­societyforec.org](mailto:asec@american­societyforec.org)

To request education or training on EC or related topics, contact Dr. Sally Rafie:

[sally@birthcontrolpharmacist.com](mailto:sally@birthcontrolpharmacist.com)

Learn more about EC at [www.not-2-late.com](http://www.not-2-late.com)