

Have you had a mishap with your contraception? Don't panic!



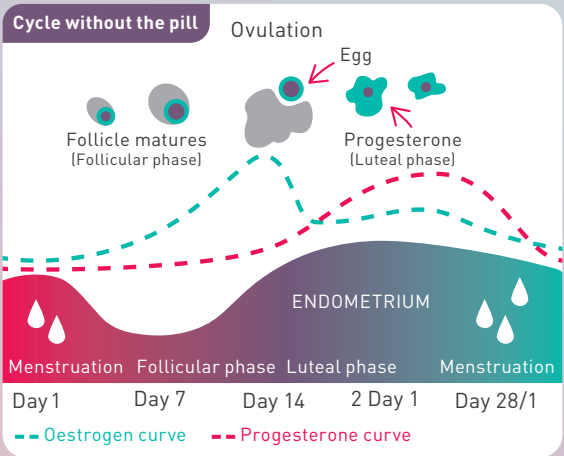
**What is important is that you know
what to do next.**

This brochure will provide you with
everything you need to know about the
emergency contraceptive pill.

*More information
is available here:* ↘

The menstrual cycle and fertility

Women who do not use hormonal contraception can become pregnant on up to 6 days per cycle. The cycle begins on the first day of your period and ends on the last day before your next period. In the first half of the cycle, the follicles mature in the ovaries. Towards the middle of the cycle, the largest follicle ruptures and the egg moves through the fallopian tube into the uterus. After ovulation, there is a 12 to 24 hour window for the egg to be fertilised.



i Why is a woman fertile for up to 6 days a month?

A man's sperm can survive for up to 5 days in a woman's body. So if you have unprotected intercourse in the days leading up to ovulation, the sperm can still fertilise the egg. The time of ovulation can also vary greatly from woman to woman but also from cycle to cycle.

There are many reasons why a mishap with contraception – regardless of the day of the cycle – can lead to an unwanted pregnancy. Taking the *emergency contraceptive pill* in time can prevent this under the right circumstances (see question 5).

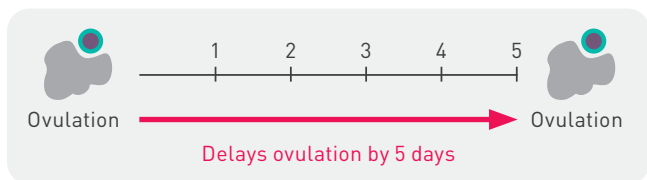
Have you had a mishap with your contraception? These things happen.

Condom broke? Forgotten to take the pill? It can happen to anyone. In these exceptional circumstances, the *emergency contraceptive pill* (also known as the morning-after pill) can prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Despite the large selection of methods and careful use, mishaps can still happen, such as for example the condom slipping off. In this case, there is no need to panic or feel embarrassed. What is important is that you deal with the situation responsibly and as quickly as possible. This brochure provides you with all the information you need about emergency contraception so you know what to do.

1 What is the *emergency contraceptive pill* and how does it work?

The *emergency contraceptive pill* is a method of emergency contraception after having unprotected intercourse. The *emergency contraceptive pill* can help prevent an unwanted pregnancy. It works by delaying ovulation long enough so the sperm is no longer viable. This prevents fertilisation and therefore a pregnancy. *Emergency contraceptive pills* have been available in pharmacies in Germany without a prescription since 2015.



2 What *emergency contraceptive pills* are there and what are their differences?

There are *emergency contraceptive pills* that contain either levonorgestrel or ulipristal acetate. The difference between these two active substances is mainly the window in which they can be taken. Levonorgestrel can be taken up to three days and ulipristal acetate up to five days after unprotected intercourse.

3 When should I take the *emergency contraceptive pill*?

The general rule is: The sooner, the better! The *emergency contraceptive pill* with the active substance levonorgestrel should preferably be taken within the first 12 hours after unprotected intercourse and no later than 72 hours (3 days). The *emergency contraceptive pill* with the active substance ulipristal acetate should also be taken as quickly as possible, but no later than 120 hours (5 days) after unprotected intercourse.

4 How do I take the *emergency contraceptive pill*?

The *emergency contraceptive pill* is swallowed whole with some water. It can be taken independent of meal times. If you start vomiting within 3 hours after taking the *emergency contraceptive pill*, take a second pill. In this case, it is important that a preparation with the same active substance is taken after vomiting. If you have a sensitive stomach, you can eat a piece of bread when you take the pill in order to prevent nausea and vomiting (see question 9). As with every medication, please read the package leaflet carefully before use.

5 Will the *emergency contraceptive pill* definitely prevent a pregnancy?

No, an *emergency contraceptive pill* can not prevent an unwanted pregnancy with absolute certainty, but it is highly effective. Pregnancy can only be prevented if ovulation has not yet taken place.

i No *emergency contraceptive pill* is 100% reliable

6 How do I know if the *emergency contraceptive pill* has worked?

If effective, your period will start at the usual time and at your regular flow. In some cases, menstruation may begin a few days earlier or later. If your period is more than 5 days later than expected or it is unusually light or heavy, it is advisable to take a pregnancy test or to see a gynaecologist. Note that taking the *emergency contraceptive pill* will not immediately result in irregular bleeding or even withdrawal bleeding.

7 Can anything impact the efficacy of the *emergency contraceptive pill*?

Yes, for example if you vomit after taking it (see also question 4). Some medications, such as anti-epileptic drugs or HIV medication, a bacterial infection as well as preparations containing St. John's wort can also reduce the efficacy of the *emergency contraceptive pill*. Your gynaecologist, pharmacist and the package leaflet can provide you with more detailed information. Alcohol and nicotine do not impact the efficacy of the *emergency contraceptive pill*.

8 Can the *emergency contraceptive pill* terminate an existing pregnancy?

The *emergency contraceptive pill* is not an abortion pill! If taken in time, it can prevent a pregnancy by delaying ovulation. But it cannot terminate a pregnancy. If you are already pregnant, the *emergency contraceptive pill* is ineffective.

i The *emergency contraceptive pill* is not an abortion pill

9 Does the *emergency contraceptive pill* have any side effects? If yes, what are they?

You may experience symptoms such as nausea, headaches, vomiting, breast tenderness or spotting. If you experience vomiting within 3 hours (see also question 4), take a second *emergency contraceptive pill*. A detailed list of side effects reported to date can be found in the leaflet. If these and/or any other side effects occur and persist, consult a gynaecologist.

10 How long will the *emergency contraceptive pill* protect me from getting pregnant?

The *emergency contraceptive pill* does not offer long-lasting protection if you have unprotected sex after taking it. Even women who regularly take the contraceptive pill should use a barrier contraceptive, such as condoms, until their next period begins. Important: The *emergency contraceptive pill* does not generally protect you against sexually transmitted diseases.

11 Can the *emergency contraceptive pill* make me infertile?

No, the *emergency contraceptive pill* does not affect fertility. Taking the *emergency contraceptive pill* now will not affect your chances of having children later.

i The *emergency contraceptive pill* does not make you infertile

12 Can the *emergency contraceptive pill* be used as a replacement for regular contraception?

No, the *emergency contraceptive pill* is not a regular method of contraception! It is only for exceptional cases and cannot be used as a replacement for regular contraceptives, such as the pill or condoms. If you have not yet found the contraceptive that is right for you, consult your gynaecologist.

13 Can I still breastfeed after taking the *emergency contraceptive pill*?

Breastfeeding women are recommended to temporarily stop breastfeeding after taking the *emergency contraceptive pill*. A break of 8 hours is recommended for preparations containing the active substance levonorgestrel, and one week is recommended for preparations containing ulipristal acetate.

14 What does the *emergency contraceptive pill* cost and will my health insurance pay for it?

In general, the *emergency contraceptive pill* with the active substance levonorgestrel costs less than 23 euro¹. The price of emergency contraception with the active substance ulipristal acetate is a little higher. Of course, prices may vary from pharmacy to pharmacy. Women under 22 can claim the money for emergency contraception back from their health insurance. However, they require a prescription.

Useful links and contacts:

Emergency line: 0800/111 0 -111 or -222



Emergency
pharmacies



Federal Centre for
Health Education



pro familia
medical centres