



PATIENT INFORMATION – EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION – ‘THE MORNING AFTER PILL’

There are two types of oral emergency contraceptive pill:

- **Levonelle** is the most common. You can take it up to 3 days (72 hours) after having unprotected sex. It does not interfere with your regular method of contraception.
- **ellaOne** is a new type of emergency contraception that you can take up to 5 days (120 hours) after having unprotected sex. It is only recommended for women over 18 years old. It may prevent other types of hormonal contraception from working for a week after use, and is not recommended for use more than once per menstrual cycle.

The effectiveness of the emergency contraceptive pill reduces over time. If taken within 24 hours of having unprotected sex, it prevents pregnancy in 95% of cases.

You can use the emergency contraceptive pill, if you are breast feeding and if you are unable to use other hormone based methods of contraception (such as the combined pill or contraceptive patch).

You should take the tablet at once

This is an emergency method of contraception and the tablet will only be effective in a single case of having unprotected sex. It does not provide protection from pregnancy for the rest of your monthly cycle as so you must use another form of contraception the next time you have sex.

If your period is over 7days late, you must go to a Family Planning Clinic. If you have any unusual pain in your abdomen you should be seen by your GP, a Family Planning Clinic or Integrated Sexual Health clinic (sometimes

called GUM or Genitourinary Medicine)* or an Accident and Emergency Unit if the pain is very severe.

It is possible that by having unprotected sex you have put your self at risk of catching an infection including HIV and gonorrhoea. A condom can provide safety from pregnancy and the majority of sexually transmitted infections. If you have any concerns about the possibility of having an infection the best place to go is to one of the genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics*. The clinics are confidential and free.

How it works

It is believed that the hormone (progesterone) in these tablets prevents pregnancy by making the lining of the uterus unsuitable for pregnancy or by delaying the egg from being released from the ovary.

The earlier you take the tablet the more effective it is. You must take it within 72 hours after having sex.

Should you need the emergency contraceptive pill again it is available free of charge from:

- Your GP
- Any Family Planning Clinic or Any genitourinary medicine (GUM) or Integrated Sexual Health clinic*
- Some pharmacies*
- The Accident and Emergency departments of some hospitals

You can also buy the emergency contraceptive pill from pharmacies and some private clinics (cost approximately £25).

You should not use the emergency contraceptive pill as a regular method of contraception.

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION – ‘THE MORNING AFTER PILL’ CONT

* Local Services

The NHS Direct Wales website allows you to search for local services in your area, such as Pharmacy and Sexual Health Clinics.

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/

Choose the service you require and follow the guidance on how to search.



If you become unwell or are injured, choose the right NHS service to make sure you get the best treatment. The Choose Well campaign explains what each NHS service does, and when it should be used.

Choosing well means that you and your family will get the best treatment. It also allows busy NHS services to help the people who need them most.

If you are unsure about which option to choose, please call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47 or visit the Choose Well website at

www.choosewellwales.org.uk

This information has been produced based on previous information leaflets and the evidence available at the time of publication. It has been clinically reviewed however if you notice anything that needs updating or amending please contact

ppi.team@wales.nhs.uk

If you require this information in another language or format please ask a member of staff.

For further advice or information contact NHS Direct Wales 0845 46 47

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk