

join the emergency contraception ACCESS CAMPAIGN

The Emergency Contraception Access Campaign is committed to:

- ◆ Educating New Yorkers about the safety, effectiveness and availability of EC as a back-up method of birth control;
- ◆ Encouraging physicians, nurses, midwives, pharmacists and other health care providers to educate and make EC widely available;
- ◆ Reducing specific barriers to the timely availability of EC, including enabling qualified pharmacists to dispense ECPs.

YES, I support the Emergency Contraception Access Campaign's goals of promoting widespread knowledge of and access to emergency contraception!

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improving access: what health professionals say

"The medical risks associated with an unintended pregnancy far outweigh any medical complications arising from the use of ECPs. ECPs are safe and simple for any woman to self-administer and I trust women to use this as responsibly and effectively as they do any other medication."

Jeanne Elisha, RN
Certified Family Nurse Practitioner

"Survivors of sexual assault need immediate and unobstructed access to emergency contraception. Rape survivors struggling with physical and psychological trauma should not also have to grapple with an unwanted pregnancy. Domestic violence victims need a safe and easy way to overcome their abusers' control over their bodies. With EC, victims of violence can reclaim their reproductive decision-making."

Julie A. Domonkos, Esq.
*My Sisters' Place
Domestic Violence Services and Advocacy Organization*

"Research shows that many women have difficulty accessing ECPs. Even under the best case scenario — women seeking help during regular business hours, Monday to Friday — one in four calls made to self-identified EC providers resulted in failure."

Kirsten Moore
Reproductive Health Technologies Project

emergency contraception

ACCESS CAMPAIGN

A coalition of public health advocates, medical and health professionals and community organizations across New York State promoting widespread knowledge of and access to emergency contraception.

emergency contraception: a back-up method for pregnancy prevention

Emergency contraception (EC) is a back-up birth control method used to prevent unintended pregnancy when a woman has unprotected sex, including when birth control fails, or in cases of sexual assault.

Emergency Contraception is Safe and Effective

EC was approved in 1997 by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a safe way to prevent pregnancy. FDA studies indicate that there are no known serious side effects associated with the use of EC.

Emergency contraceptive pills (ECPs) — also known as the “morning-after pill” — are a higher dose of birth control pills which must be taken within 72 hours after unprotected intercourse.

According to The New England Journal of Medicine, EC could prevent as many as 1.7 million of the approximately 3 million unintended pregnancies that occur each year in the United States.

ECPs reduce the risk of pregnancy by more than 75 percent if taken within 72 hours. **ECPs are almost seven times more effective if taken within the first 24 hours of unprotected sex.**

If a woman is already pregnant when she takes EC, it will not disrupt the pregnancy or harm the fetus in any way.

obstacles to EC access

Women Face Barriers to Accessing EC

A woman in New York can only obtain EC with a prescription from her physician or other health care provider. However, the window of time in which ECPs are effective — just 72 hours — requires that women access the pills quickly, often outside traditional medical office hours. And, EC is even more effective if a woman can take it within 24 hours of unprotected sex.

A Physician's Perspective

“Contraceptives can let any woman down. Accidents don't discriminate — they happen to single and married women; mothers and daughters; women in their 20s, 30s and throughout their reproductive years. If most women had easy, timely access to EC, we could help cut the US rate of unintended pregnancy in half.”

Carolyn Westhoff, MD, FACOG

*Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology
College of Physicians and Surgeons
Columbia University*

Awaiting FDA Action: Over-the-Counter Approval

Recognizing the extreme safety of emergency contraception, the American Medical Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and many other health organizations support FDA approval to make emergency contraceptive pills available over-the-counter (OTC), without a prescription. The FDA is currently reviewing a petition urging OTC status but approval is likely to take time.

what New York can do: improving access to EC through pharmacists

By making EC available directly through a local pharmacist, women can obtain it in a timely and convenient manner. Local, trained pharmacists are widely accessible to women and can provide an easy and cost-effective way to access EC.

In Washington, California, Alaska and Hawaii, a pharmacist and a physician or nurse practitioner can voluntarily enter into a collaborative agreement that permits the pharmacist to dispense EC directly to a woman. More than a dozen state legislatures, including New York, are currently considering similar proposals.

EC is not RU-486, also known as mifepristone or “the medical abortion pill.”

A Pharmacist's Perspective

“Reducing the rate of unintended pregnancy is an important public health priority for New York and better access to EC through pharmacies could make a substantial impact. Local, trained pharmacists can play a pivotal role in dispensing EC to women unable to get a prescription quickly enough or who lack a health care provider. Providing immediate EC treatment will, in many cases, mean the difference between a woman receiving effective pregnancy prevention or dealing with the consequences of unplanned pregnancy.”

Ray Macioci, RPh

*President-Elect
NYC Pharmacists Society*