

# Emergency Contraception: Improving Access, Increasing Awareness

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Because the  
Unexpected Happens

# Unintended Pregnancy: A Public Health Concern

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- More than 3 million unintended pregnancies occur each year in the United States<sup>1a</sup>
  - More than 50% occur among women using contraceptives<sup>1b</sup>
  - Nearly 50% of unintended pregnancies end in abortion<sup>2</sup>

1a-b. Trussell, J. "Emergency Contraceptive Pills: A Simple Proposal to Reduce Unintended Pregnancies." *Family Planning Perspectives*. 1992. 24;269-273.

2. Henshaw, SK. "Unintended pregnancy in the United States." *Family Planning Perspectives*. 1998;30:24-29, 46.

# What EC Is

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- EC prevents pregnancy after contraceptive failure, unprotected sex, or sexual assault
  - Reduces the chance of pregnancy by up to 89% if used within 72 hours of intercourse
  - The sooner one takes EC, the more effective it is
- The progestin levonorgestrel prevents ovulation or fertilization. It may also inhibit implantation
  - First tablet taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex
  - Second tablet taken 12 hours later

# The Reproductive Process

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There are many complex, biological steps in establishing a pregnancy; this process can fail (and often does) at any point:

- Follicle maturation
- Process of ovulation
- Sperm migration into/through fallopian tube, including adhesions of spermatozoa to epithelium needed to acquire and maintain fertilizing capacity
- Fertilization
- Zygote development in fallopian tube
- Zygote transport through fallopian tube
- Preimplantation development in uterus
- Uterine retentiveness of free laying morula or blastocyst
- Endometrial receptivity
- Blastocyst signaling, adhesion, and invasiveness
- Corpus luteum sufficiency and responsiveness to hCG

# Definition of Pregnancy

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- NIH/FDA

- Pregnancy encompasses the period of time from confirmation of implantation until expulsion or extraction of the fetus

- ACOG

- Pregnancy is the state of a female after conception and until termination of the gestation
- Conception is the implantation of the blastocyst. It is not synonymous with fertilization; it is synonymous with implantation

# What EC Is NOT:

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- NOT RU-486 (the abortion pill)
- NOT effective if a woman is already pregnant
- NOT harmful to an existing pregnancy
- NOT for use as routine birth control

Two Years Post-OTC Approval

# EC's Dual-Label Status

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- In August 2006, EC (Plan B<sup>®</sup>) became the *first and only* product to be granted dual-label status by the FDA
  - Same product in the same strength is approved for both Rx and OTC distribution
- Unique classification requires OTC product to be stocked behind-the-counter at the pharmacy
  - Proof-of-age is required to purchase without an Rx

# EC in 2008

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- Overall, EC has been embraced by consumers
  - More women are using Plan B<sup>®</sup>3,4
- Women are increasingly comfortable with EC
  - 83% are “glad people can get it without a prescription”5
  - 45% say that buying EC directly from a pharmacy without a prescription is “ideal”6

3. IMS Weekly NPA and AC Nielsen. “Plan B<sup>®</sup> Weekly TRx and OTC Trends Through January 12, 2008.” November 2, 2006-January 2, 2008.

4. IMS Health 2002-2006 and Dual-label Shipment Data 2006-2007. “Improved Access to Plan B<sup>®</sup> Has Resulted in Dramatic Sales Increases.”

5. MSNBC Online Poll. “The morning-after pill, Plan B<sup>®</sup> has been available over the counter for almost a year. How do you feel about it?” Total 10474 respondents. August 2007.

6. GFK Roper. “Plan B<sup>®</sup> Consumer Tracking Study, Overview/Highlights.” June 2007.

# Pharmacist Comfort Level

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- U.S. pharmacists are comfortable with EC:
  - 99% of pharmacists selling EC are aware of dual-label status<sup>7a</sup>
  - Greater than 95% of pharmacists are comfortable selling/dispensing EC<sup>7b</sup>
  - More than 90% of pharmacists are in compliance with EC dispensing guidelines<sup>8</sup>
  - When out of stock, 92% of pharmacists refer customers to a pharmacy that has EC in stock<sup>7c</sup>

7a-c. Harris Interactive. "Survey: Plan B® Perceptions Study: Pharmacists." July 2007.

8. Duramed Pharmaceuticals Inc. "CARE<sup>SM</sup> Program Periodic Report." Conducted January 1, 2007-June 1, 2007

Looking Ahead:  
There Is Still Work To Be Done

# Barriers to Overcome

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- The need remains for better access for all women:
  - Women under 17
  - Indigent population

# Barriers to Overcome

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- EC controversies still exist
  - Studies questioning EC's efficacy and impact on sexual behavior
    - Raymond, E. "Effect of an emergency contraceptive pill intervention on pregnancy risk behavior."  
*Contraception*. 2008. 77;333-336.
    - Raymond, E.; Trussell, J. "Population Effect of Increased Access to Emergency Contraceptive Pills."  
*Obstetrics & Gynecology*. 2007. 109;181-188.

# Success in NYC: Columbia's Efforts

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- Private Practice
- Family Planning Clinics
  - At Columbia's clinic, 35% of all patients seeking contraception are candidates for EC
- School-based Clinics

# Recommendations

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- Do *MORE* of what we're doing now
  - Educate key groups about the facts of conception, what EC is and how it works
    - Consumers
    - Pharmacists
    - Media
  - Build upon successes by promoting EC access through Family Planning Clinics and the Emergency Contraception Awareness and Access Project (ECAAP)

# Resources For Women

- Patient Request Card for discreet pharmacy purchase
  - Downloadable at [www.go2planB.com](http://www.go2planB.com)

Advertisement

**Plan B® is now over-the-counter for consumers 18 and older!**

Use this card to purchase it discreetly

*Important Steps...*


- ▶ Visit local pharmacy counter to get Plan B®
- ▶ Bring government issued proof-of-age to purchase
- ▶ Use this card to ask for it privately (See back for usage details)
- ▶ Take as soon as possible within 3 days (72 hours) after unprotected sex

Prescription needed for 17 and under

Advertisement

**Just hand this card to a pharmacy employee with your ID**

- I would like to purchase Plan B®
- I would like to ask the pharmacist a few questions in private
- I called earlier for Plan B® and am here to pick it up

 [www.go2planb.com](http://www.go2planb.com) | 1.800.370.1271

# Resources For Women

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- Web sites:
  - [www.go2planb.com](http://www.go2planb.com)
  - [www.not-2-late.org](http://www.not-2-late.org)
  - [www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)
- Plan B<sup>®</sup> Information hotline: 1-800-370-1271
  - Educational patient materials can be ordered here
  - Nurses available 24/7 to answer questions about EC

# Looking Ahead

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- Sustained education is vital for key segments
  - Consumers
  - Pharmacists
  - Medical community
  - Advocates and community leaders like you
- Need to achieve easier access at the local level
  - Replicate NYC and state models of support of health clinics, specifically toward EC
    - NYC has provided \$3 million funding toward EC
    - NY Medicare now covers non-prescription EC

Thank You