



Emergency Contraception Availability Over-the-Counter

What you need to know about Plan B® OTC

In August 2006, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Plan B, the dedicated emergency contraception (EC) product, for over-the-counter (OTC) sales to consumers 18 and older. The OTC product was made available starting November 2006. Plan B will be kept behind the pharmacy counter and not on store shelves. Consumers will need to show proof of age to get Plan B.

Emergency contraception (EC) is an FDA-approved form of contraception that is also known as the “morning-after pill.” It is an extremely time-sensitive drug that works for up to 120 hours, but is most effective if used within the first 12 to 24 hours following unprotected sex, birth control failure or sexual assault. EC does not affect an existing pregnancy, and should not be confused with the “abortion pill,” also known as RU-486. For more information EC, please visit: www.not-2-late.com.

Many Wisconsin emergency rooms still do not provide EC, delaying or denying access for survivors of sexual assault seeking treatment. The Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Coalition (CCRV) is a diverse group of organizations dedicated to ensuring comprehensive health care for rape victims. Despite the new FDA decision, the CCRV Coalition notes that emergency rooms should not presume that women will have access to Plan B at the pharmacy and still must improve access to EC at hospital emergency rooms.

Where will Plan B be available over-the-counter (OTC)?

- Plan B will only be available in drug stores and at clinics. You will not be able to obtain Plan B in gas stations, grocery or convenience stores.
- National chain pharmacies like Walgreens, CVS and Wal-Mart have indicated that they will carry Plan B OTC.
- Online retailers such as Drugstore.com and eDrugstore will also make EC available.
- Plan B will NOT be available in the aisle where other contraceptives are located. You must ask for Plan B at the pharmacy counter and be able to show proof of age.

Where else can I get Plan B?

- Currently you can get Plan B at family planning clinics. Go to www.hcet.org/wfpp/clinics.asp for a list of family planning clinics in Wisconsin. You can also refer to ec.princeton.edu/get-ec-now.html to search for a list of additional EC Providers in Wisconsin.
- If you do not have access to a family planning clinic, you can call **1-866-EC-FIRST** and a nurse will help you find the nearest physician who will provide Plan B to you or assist you in obtaining a prescription for EC over the phone.
- It is important to ask your physician or other health care provider for an advance supply of Plan B. If you have Plan B on hand in your medicine cabinet you will be able to avoid unnecessary delays if you ever need back-up birth control.

How much with Plan B cost as OTC?

- The current cost of Plan B ranges from \$25-40. It is likely that the cost will increase slightly due to the FDA's requirement that the manufacturer change its packaging.
- However, most family planning clinics will continue to offer Plan B on a sliding fee scale based on the patient's ability to pay.
- Medicaid (including the Family Planning Waiver) will only cover Plan B with a prescription from a health care provider or specially trained pharmacist. For other insurance, check with the insurance company to determine whether a prescription is required for coverage.

Can anyone purchase Plan B?

- Anyone over the age of 18 who can provide proof of their age will be able to purchase Plan B without a prescription in pharmacies.
- Men ages 18 and older can purchase Plan B OTC in pharmacies beginning in November, 2006. Men under 18 do NOT have the option to obtain a prescription for Plan B, nor to get it through pharmacy access.

What can I do if the pharmacist refuses to give me Plan B?

- You have a right to access birth control, including Plan B, without harassment or delay caused by an objecting pharmacist.
- Pharmacists in Wisconsin have an ethical duty not to obstruct patient access to legal medications.
- Ask to speak with the pharmacist's manager and report the refusal immediately.
- Call **1-866-PILL-4-US** to report EC denials. You can also file a complaint against a refusing pharmacist with the Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing. Call **608-266-7482** or email web@drl.state.wi.us for more information on how to file a complaint.

Is EC safe for teens under 18?

- Yes. There is no medical reason to restrict access to EC for teens.
- Research shows that easier access to EC does NOT increase sexual risk taking and does NOT reduce the use of regular ongoing birth control.
- Leading medical organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists agree that access to Plan B should not be restricted by age.

Additional EC Information & Access Resources

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| • Not-2-Late.com | (888) NOT-2LATE | www.not-2-late.com |
| • EC Hotline | (888) EC-FIRST | www.ezec.org |
| • EC Refusal Hotline | (866) PILL-4-US | www.nwlc.org |
| • Domestic Violence Services | (800) 799-SAFE | www.wcadv.org |
| • Sexual Assault Services | (800) 656-HOPE | www.wcasa.org |
| • Family Planning Clinics | | www.psssst.org |
| • Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin | (800) 230-PLAN | www.ppwi.org |