



Emergency Contraception Myths & Facts

Anti-choice groups have spread misinformation about Emergency Contraception for years, and it can be hard to keep track of what is real and what isn't. Below are some of the most common myths about emergency contraception—and the truth about it.

MYTH: I have to be 18 to buy emergency contraception.

FACT: There is no age restriction on emergency contraception.

In 2013, the FDA approved many brands of EC to be sold over-the-counter to anyone, regardless of age or gender. While some states have additional laws that bar young people from purchasing EC, Maryland does not have any such law.¹

MYTH: I need a prescription from my doctor to buy emergency contraception.

FACT: Emergency contraception is sold over-the-counter in pharmacies.

In some pharmacies, EC is considered “behind-the-counter”, as pharmacists will place it in locked boxes or in shelves behind the register, forcing customers to ask the pharmacist for it directly, even though it is technically an over-the-counter drug. Even though this can be inconvenient, it is important to remember that EC *is* available in pharmacies, with no prescription necessary.

MYTH: There are no options for me to purchase EC on my college campus.

FACT: Many colleges in Maryland offer options for students to purchase EC.

Many college health centers across the state offer EC for students, often selling it at a lower price than what you'd find at a pharmacy.

MYTH: Emergency contraception is the same as the abortion pill.

FACT: Emergency contraception is not an abortion.

EC contains hormones that suppress ovulation, block fertilization, and/or prevent a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus.² The abortion pill, on the other hand, works by blocking your body's progesterone, the hormone needed to grow a pregnancy. Taking EC does not impact an existing pregnancy at all.³

¹ Senator Manno, et al., Public Health - Access to Emergency Contraception - Student Health Centers and Vending Machines (Senate Bill 969), http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2018rs/fnotes/bil_0009/sb0969.pdf

² “Emergency Contraception”, Planned Parenthood, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/morning-after-pill-emergency-contraception>

³ “The Abortion Pill”, Planned Parenthood, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/abortion>