



**NARAL**

PRO-CHOICE MARYLAND FUND

# EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

ACCESS & BARRIERS IN THE  
US AND MARYLAND



# WHAT IS EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION?

Commonly known as the "morning-after pill" or by the brand name, **Plan B One-Step** ©, emergency contraception (EC) is a method of contraception that helps prevent pregnancy **after** unprotected intercourse or contraceptive failure has occurred.

# WHAT IS EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION?

There are 3 different forms of EC:

- **Plan B One-Step** © can work to prevent pregnancy if taken within 72 hours after unprotected sex, but the sooner it is taken, the more effective it will be.
- **Ella** © is a prescription medication that acts in a similar way to Plan-B, but can be taken up to 5 days after
- **Paragard** © is a non-hormonal copper intrauterine device that is placed by a provider within 5 days of unprotected sex, and lasts as a birth control method for up to 12 years.

# EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION MISCONCEPTIONS



1. There is **no limit to the amount of times you can use emergency contraception** in your lifetime.
2. **Emergency contraception is not abortion care!** EC works to prevent ovulation after unprotected sex. If you are already pregnant taking EC will not impact your pregnancy.
3. Emergency contraception has **no impact on future fertility!**



# HOW TO ACCESS EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

- The easiest way to access emergency contraception is **over the counter** at your nearest **pharmacy**, but as mentioned above you can also visit a **provider's office** who can provide EC in clinic as well.
- Prices range from **\$35-\$60**, and common brands include Plan-B One Step, Preventeza, My Way, Next Choice One Dose, Take Action and Aftera
- Some **independent abortion care providers** also have over the counter EC available at no cost!

# MILESTONES IN EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION ACCESS

2016

Under the Maryland Contraceptive Equity Act, Maryland became one of the first states to legislate insurance coverage of emergency contraception.

2006

Finally 5 years later, the FDA approved the sale of Plan-B OTC for patients 18 and older. Younger than 18 would still require prescription.

1999

Plan-B approved by FDA

2001

The Center for Reproductive Rights filed a petition for the FDA to approve Plan-B for over the counter (OTC) use. This was followed by several studies, journal articles, postponements, and denials.

2013

FDA approves the sale of Plan-B OTC without age restrictions.



# CURRENT BARRIERS TO EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION ACCESS

Although EC has been approved for sale OTC, in many states including Maryland, barriers to access still exist.

A 2017 report by NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland Fund found that in Maryland three main barriers that limit access to EC include **age restrictions, improper placement** of EC in stores, and **cost**.

This was demonstrated by more than one-third of stores **implementing unnecessary age restrictions**, half of stores **keeping products behind counters**, and over one-third of stores using **locking devices** over EC packaging. One of three volunteers visiting stores rated their experiences accessing EC as "somewhat difficult" or "difficult"

All people should have access to EC and the FDA and federal courts have recognized this fact. Advocates must continue to put pressure on pharmacies to **stop the use of age restrictions and make it easier to locate EC in stores**. Additionally, advocates must continue to make EC accessible by working towards **increasing availability in university and community settings**.

