

EDUCATOR RESOURCE—FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When should emergency contraception be considered?

Anytime no contraception is used and someone with a penis ejaculates inside someone with a vagina. Emergency contraception should also be used if another contraception has been used improperly or something unexpected happens (e.g., when two or more combined hormonal contraceptive pills are missed or when a condom breaks). Pregnancy is especially likely on the most fertile days (mid-menstrual cycle, when cervical mucus is wet, slippery, and clear). (For people with cycles ranging from 26 to 32 days, the most fertile days are 8 to 19, with day 1 as the first day of a person’s period).

Can you become pregnant from pre-ejaculate (“pre-cum”)?

There can be enough sperm in pre-ejaculate to cause a pregnancy; however, the likelihood of pregnancy from pre-ejaculate is less than from ejaculation.

Does the withdrawal method protect against STBBIs?

The withdrawal method does not protect against STBBIs.

Is it true that external condoms are cumbersome and reduce pleasure?

Some people love condoms and other people do not—some find sex more pleasurable with a condom because they do not have to worry about STBBIs and pregnancy or ejaculate/semen going everywhere. For some people, external condoms can reduce sensation but they do not necessarily reduce pleasure. Some people like external condoms because they can prolong erections and reduce early ejaculation. Sexual pleasure is something that often involves the mind and body. One way to improve sensation and pleasure for the body when using an external condom is the use of lubricant.

What are some tips for putting on and removing a condom from the penis?

Getting used to putting on and removing a condom takes practise. Tips include: putting it on while standing up to avoid losing an erection, ensuring the condom is removed before erection is gone to avoid spilling ejaculate, and using water-based lubricant for comfort and pleasure of both partners and to avoid condom breaking.

Do all hormonal contraceptives require a prescription?

Hormonal contraceptives all require a prescription except for the progestin-only emergency contraceptive pill. The exception to this is Quebec, where accessing the emergency contraception pill requires a prescription. In Saskatchewan, you will have to ask the pharmacist for the emergency contraceptive pill and answer some questions.

Does the emergency contraception pill actually work?

There are 3 types of oral emergency contraception each with their own directions for use. The progestin-only emergency contraceptive pill is the only type that does not require a prescription (apart from Quebec). To be effective, oral emergency contraception must be taken as soon as possible (most effective if taken within 3 days but can work up to 5 days) following unprotected penis-vagina intercourse (when another contraceptive method has failed and/or was not used). Oral emergency contraception will only be effective if used before ovulation. There may be reduced efficacy in individuals over 176 pounds (80 kg). If a healthcare provider cannot be seen within the first three days, the most appropriate next step is to take the progestin-only pill while trying to see a health care provider within 7 days to get a copper IUD as emergency contraception. Emergency contraception does not prevent against STBBIs.

Is using emergency contraception the same as having an abortion?

No, using emergency contraception and having an abortion are different. Oral emergency contraception works by stopping ovulation (the release of the egg from the ovary) and therefore prevents pregnancy from happening. Abortion happens after a fertilized egg (embryo) implants in a uterus (pregnancy). An abortion is the termination of pregnancy and an emptying of the contents of the uterus using either medication or surgical means.

I'm worried that I'm pregnant, what do I do?

If a student is worried about being pregnant, it is best to wait approximately 2 to 3 weeks after intercourse to take a pregnancy test. If a test is taken sooner, it may result in a false negative. With pregnancy tests, there are no false positives, only false negatives (if you take the test too early and there is not yet enough of the pregnancy hormone HCG in your urine, then you will have a false negative test result). If it has been confirmed that the student is pregnant, provide them with a list of places to call for pro-choice options counselling and/or websites to visit with evidence-based information on all of their options. (For more information, see 9.5 resources).

Can young people have IUDs/IUSs too?

Yes. In general, IUDs and IUSs are used less frequently by adolescents but they are an effective, long-acting, reversible contraception option that can be used by young people. They are particularly good for those who have difficulty taking a pill at the same time every day or for those who have adverse side effects from oral contraceptive pills. Those who have issues with the oral contraceptive pills will not necessarily have adverse reactions to the hormonal IUD/IUS. If an individual gets an IUD/IUS, condom use should still be encouraged to prevent STBBIs.