

# What to Know: Accessing Plan B®

*Plan B® is a form of emergency contraception; birth control you can use to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex.*

## How do I get it?

- Plan B® (or a different brand of emergency contraception that works the same way) **is available at all military pharmacies.**
- Tricare beneficiary patients may come directly to a military pharmacy and receive Plan B® (or generic equivalent) **without a prescription and without age restrictions.**
- A form will be completed by the patient at the pharmacy for documentation purposes. Non-beneficiary patients can purchase Plan B® at your local civilian pharmacy also without a prescription and without needing to show identification. Plan B usually costs about \$40-\$50, and generics generally cost less, about \$11-\$45.
- Sometimes the medication is locked up or kept behind the counter, so you may have to ask the pharmacist or store clerk for help getting it.

## How do I take it?

- ✓ Take the medication as soon as you can after unprotected sex. Simply swallow the tablet the way you would any other pill. Read the instructions that come in the package for more information. It's safe to continue taking your birth control pills as usual after taking Plan B®. Use a backup form of birth control (such as a condom) for at least seven days as well.
- ✓ Medication should be used as soon as possible to be the most effective but should be consumed **no later than 72 hours after unprotected sex or contraceptive failure.**

## What else should I know?

**ALWAYS AVAILABLE:** You may proactively request Plan B® to keep on hand in case of emergency, You will not be turned away when you request Plan B®, even if you have made two or more previous requests within the same two-month time frame. However, if this is the situation, you may be advised and assisted in seeking family planning counseling for consideration of a more sustainable and ongoing form of birth control.

**HOW IT WORKS:** The medication works by delaying ovulation, so it only protects against the most recent unprotected intercourse and will not continue to protect you the rest of the month from an unplanned pregnancy or terminate an already conceived pregnancy. Plan B® does expire so be sure to locate the expiration date on the box to ensure your medication is still usable.

**PICK-UP OPTION FOR PARTNERS:** All partners can request Plan B® (or generic equivalent) at a military pharmacy. They will be asked to present their military identification card and the identification card of the eligible female beneficiary who will consume the medication.



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## Do I have other options?

*Other forms of emergency contraception (birth control you can use to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex) are available to service members.*

### 1 Copper Intrauterine Device (IUD)

- Most effective at preventing pregnancy for all women if inserted **within 5 days after unprotected sex**.
- Must be inserted vaginally by a provider.
- Once inserted, it **provides safe and effective birth control for up to 12 years**.

### 2 Hormonal IUDs (Liletta® and Mirena®)

- Must be inserted vaginally by a provider.
- Clinical research has demonstrated that Liletta® and Mirena® are a safe and effective choices for emergency contraception.
- Once inserted, it **provides safe and effective birth control for up to 8 years**.

### 3 ella®

- Highly effective at preventing pregnancy if taken **within 5 days after unprotected sex**.
- Requires a prescription from your provider.
- Not recommended for women who are breastfeeding or have a body mass index (BMI) greater than 30. After taking ella® you should wait 5 days before resuming use of hormonal birth control method, including the pill. During this period, use a back up method such as condoms if you have sex.

## What's the difference?

- ✓ For other types of emergency contraception (such as the copper IUD, Paragard®, 52-mg levonorgestrel-releasing IUDs, Liletta® and Mirena®, or ella® morning-after pill), **you need an appointment with or prescription from a health care provider**.
- ✓ Along with acting as an emergency contraceptive, copper and hormonal IUDs will also provide you **with long-term, no-maintenance required birth control**, ensuring that you will be preventing pregnancy in the future.
- ✓ Copper and hormonal IUDs may be a more effective emergency contraceptive method than Plan B® or ella® for breastfeeding women or women with a BMI greater than 30.

