**Emergency Contraception Facts**

- Women of all ages can use emergency contraception to prevent unplanned pregnancy if they have had sex without using contraception or their contraception has failed.
- Many women who have had a crisis pregnancy did not think to use emergency contraception.
- Emergency contraception is not suitable as a regular method of contraception and it does not prevent pregnancy in every woman.
- Many women believe that emergency contraception can only be taken 3 times in their lifetimes - there is no evidence to support this.
- There is no evidence to suggest that use of emergency contraception can cause infertility.
- If you are already pregnant, emergency contraceptive pills or the coil will not work.
- Emergency contraception does not provide any protection from sexually transmitted infections.

**Long-Term Contraception**

Most people use condoms or the pill to avoid unplanned pregnancy. Increasing numbers of women are now choosing more reliable long-term methods of contraception.

These include:
- The implant
- The injection
- The IUS
- The IUD (The Copper Coil)

These methods are 99% effective. Remember a condom is the only method of contraception that can protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

For more information on the best long-term contraceptive choice for you, talk to a pharmacist, GP or Family Planning Clinic, or visit thinkcontraception.ie.

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**For more information visit thinkcontraception.ie**

**Disclaimer**

The information in this leaflet has been supplied by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme in April 2013. It has made every effort to ensure that the information is accurate before going to print. Please remember that the information in this leaflet does not replace medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. If you have questions or concerns or need further information, visit a pharmacist, GP or Family Planning Clinic for professional advice.

**About the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme**

The HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme is a section of the Health Service Executive that has been set up to develop and implement a strategy to address the issue of crisis pregnancy in Ireland. For more information, visit crisispregnancy.ie.

**Age of consent**

The age of sexual consent in Ireland is 17 years for boys and girls.

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**If you’ve taken a chance or your contraception has failed, you could be at risk of getting pregnant. Emergency contraception is more effective the sooner you take it after having unprotected sex.**
What is emergency contraception?

Emergency contraception is a secondary method or ‘back-up’ contraceptive. It can be used if you want to avoid an unplanned pregnancy after you have had sex without using contraception or if contraception has failed (e.g. the condom slipped or you missed a pill). Emergency contraception is more effective the sooner you take it after having unprotected sex.

Emergency contraception does not provide any protection from sexually transmitted infections (STIs). To get advice on STI testing visit thinkcontraception.ie.

Emergency contraception is more effective the sooner you take it after having unprotected sex.

There are different emergency contraception choices for different situations, depending on when you had your last period and how long it has been since you had unprotected sex. Emergency contraception is more effective the sooner you take it after having unprotected sex. Ask a pharmacist for a private consultation or talk to a GP or Family Planning Clinic about the best option for you. The following table will give you an outline of the choices available.

For more information on emergency contraception visit thinkcontraception.ie.

### Your Emergency Contraception Choices

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<td>3 Day Pill (Levonelle or Norlevo)</td>
<td>Is 99% effective in preventing pregnancy if taken within 12 hours after unprotected intercourse. Is less effective on day 2 and day 3.</td>
<td>Delaying ovulation.</td>
<td>Does not protect you from pregnancy the next time you have sex. Women continuing to use a hormonal method of contraception are advised to take extra precautions for up to 9 days. Get advice on resuming your regular method of contraception from a pharmacist, GP or Family Planning Clinic.</td>
<td>The cost of contraception varies depending on what form is most suitable to you, what providers are available to you and whether or not you have a medical card. Talk to a pharmacist, GP or Family Planning Clinic for more information on costs.</td>
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<td>5 Day Pill (EllaOne)</td>
<td>Is 99.5% effective but should be taken as soon as possible.</td>
<td>Delaying ovulation.</td>
<td>Does not protect you from pregnancy the next time you have sex. Women continuing to use a hormonal method of contraception are advised to take extra precautions for up to 16 days. Get advice on resuming your regular method of contraception from a pharmacist, GP or Family Planning Clinic.</td>
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<td>The Copper Coil (Post Coital IUD)</td>
<td>Is 99.9% effective but get advice as soon as possible.</td>
<td>• Preventing sperm from joining an egg.</td>
<td>Can be left in the uterus for up to 10 years as a regular method of contraception. Or, Can be removed if required at your next period.</td>
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Norlevo is available directly from pharmacists. Levonelle and Norlevo are available on prescription from GPs (including out of hours co-ops) or Family Planning Clinics. Norlevo is available directly from pharmacists. EllaOne is available directly from pharmacists. Medical card holders require a prescription from a GP (including out of hours co-ops) or Family Planning Clinic. Can be inserted by specially trained GPs or Family Planning Clinics.