

## *Provider Fact Sheet*

### **EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION:**

#### **A safe and effective treatment option for sexual assault victims**

Emergency contraception (EC) is a safe and effective method of preventing pregnancy after unprotected sex, sexual assault or contraceptive failure.

#### ***Required practice***

Since Jan. 1, 2008, Oregon law requires all hospital emergency rooms to provide “unbiased, medically and factually accurate written and oral information about emergency contraception” to sexual assault victims.<sup>1</sup> If a sexual assault victim requests EC, then the hospital must provide the victim with EC as soon as possible upon arrival and before she is discharged from the hospital.

- In Oregon, a person of any age may seek services for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and be provided birth control information and services by a physician or nurse practitioner, without parental consent. (ORS 109.610, 109.640).
- EC is time-sensitive. The sooner it is given, the better it works. There are two forms of EC approved by the FDA for use in the United States: 1) pre-packaged pills containing the hormone progestin and marketed under the names Plan B®, Plan B One-Step® and Next Choice® (generic) and 2) pre-packaged pills containing ulipristal acetate (in the class of drugs known as selective progesterone-receptor modulators) and marketed under the name ella®.<sup>2,3</sup>
- Originally, the Plan B regimen required two pills, taken 12 hours apart. More recently, Plan B One-Step became available and only requires one pill. Both types are available, but the two-pill regimen is gradually being replaced by the more convenient Plan B One-Step. Ella is a single-dose pill that is taken up to five days after unprotected intercourse.<sup>2</sup>

#### ***Rationale***

- The side effects of EC are temporary and may include nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness and breast tenderness. Plan B® appears to have the fewest side effects.<sup>3</sup>
- EC is safe, effective and simple to use. It is an FDA-approved method of preventing pregnancy and is not associated with any serious or harmful side effects. EC is not dangerous to women with particular medical conditions, and women can diagnose their own need for the treatment.<sup>4</sup>
- EC prevents pregnancy and the need for abortion. Making emergency contraceptives more widely available in Oregon is one of the most important steps that can be taken to help women reduce their risk of unintended pregnancy and the consequent need for abortion.
- EC reduces the likelihood of pregnancy by 81 percent to 90 percent when taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex.<sup>2</sup>
- EC is birth control and does not cause abortion. EC is not the same as the abortion pill, RU-486. Rather, EC prevents pregnancy by inhibiting or delaying ovulation or by preventing implantation before a pregnancy occurs. Progestin-based EC pills do not affect an established pregnancy. However, according to the product labeling for ella, women with known or suspected pregnancy and women who are breastfeeding should not use ella.<sup>2,5</sup>
- The American College of Emergency Physicians, American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the American Medical Association all support making EC available in emergency rooms to victims of sexual assault.
- In addition to Oregon, 17 other states and the District of Columbia have laws requiring emergency room staff to offer EC to women after sexual assault.<sup>2</sup>

### **Resources for providers**

- Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force website: [www.oregonsatf.org](http://www.oregonsatf.org)
- Oregon Secretary of State, Administrative Rules Archives: [http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARs\\_300/OAR\\_333/333\\_505.html](http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARs_300/OAR_333/333_505.html)
- A website operated by the Office of Population Research at Princeton University and by the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals that has no connection with any pharmaceutical company or for-profit organization: <http://ec.princeton.edu/>. This website is peer-reviewed by a panel of independent experts.
- Association of Reproductive Health Professionals website: [www.arhp.org](http://www.arhp.org)
- Kaiser Family Foundation website: [www.kff.org/womenshealth/](http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/)
- A website dedicated to product information and prescribing guidelines: [www.go2planb.com](http://www.go2planb.com).
- Contraceptive Technology by Hatcher et. al. 19th Ed. Tiger, GA – a comprehensive textbook on contraceptives
- Oregon Public Health, Family Planning Program website: [www.healthoregon.org/fp/ec/index.shtml](http://www.healthoregon.org/fp/ec/index.shtml)

### **References**

1. Oregon Revised Statute, ORS Chapter 441 and Oregon Administrative Rule, OAR 333-505-0120, effective January 1, 2008
2. Kaiser Family Foundation: Emergency Contraception, Washington, DC: Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation. Women's Health Policy Facts. August 2010, retrieved 09/08/10: [www.kff.org/womenshealth/upload/3344-04.pdf](http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/upload/3344-04.pdf).
3. Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP). The Facts About Emergency Contraception – What You Need to Know. June 2005
4. Charlotte Ellertson et al. Should Emergency Contraceptive Pills Be Available Without a Prescription?, 53 JAMWA 226, 227-28 (1998); David A. Grimes, Switching Emergency Contraception to Over-the-Counter Status, 347 New England Journal of Medicine 846, 846-47 (2002)
5. US Food and Drug Administration, FDA approves ella™ tablets for prescription emergency contraception, FDA News Release, August 13, 2010, retrieved 09/08/10: [www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm222428.htm](http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm222428.htm)