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Emergency contraception

Emergency contraception is considered as a safe and effective way to prevent pregnancy that occurs as a result of unprotected intercourse.

Emergency contraceptives can be used in:

In case of contraceptive failure or incorrect use that may include:

- Any breakage, slippage or incorrect use of condom
- When three or more successively missed combined pills
- Miscalculation of the periodic abstinence method
- In case of expulsion of an intrauterine contraceptive device or hormonal contraceptive implant,

There are two methods of emergency contraception:

1. Emergency contraception pills (ECPS)
2. Copper- bearing intrauterine devices (IUDS)

Emergency contraception pills (ECPS):

Levonorgestrel is recommended as emergency contraceptive pill by world health organization.

This progestogen only pill should be taken as a single dose of 1.5 mg within five days of unprotected sex.

Alternatively, levonorgestrel is advised to take in two doses as 0.75 mg each, 12 hours apart.

This shows 52-94% of effectiveness in preventing pregnancy.

Mode of action:

Preventing or delaying ovulation

Preventing the ability of sperm to bind with the ovum.

Copper- bearing intrauterine devices (IUDS):

Copper- bearing intrauterine devices (IUDS) recommended by WHO as an emergency contraceptive.

This has to be inserted into uterus within 5 days of unprotected sex.

Mode of action:

The copper bearing IUD principally prevents fertilization by causing a chemical change that damages and ovum before fertilization.