

## Annex 7: Protocols for emergency contraception

### Emergency contraception (EC) regimens

	EC pills			Intrauterine device (IUD) for EC
Type of EC	Levonorgestrel (LNG) only	Combined regimen	Ulipristal acetate (UPA)	Copper-bearing IUD
Dose	Single-dose 1.5 mg LNG (or 2 x 0.75 mg LNG tablets)	100 µg ethinyl estradiol + 0.5 mg LNG. Repeat 12 hours later	30 mg UPA	
Timing/ effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As early as possible, within 120 hours after the incident</li> <li>The longer the delay in taking EC pills, the lower the effectiveness</li> <li>Combined EC pills are less effective and have more side-effects than LNG or UPA</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to 120 hours (5 days)</li> </ul>

Source: Contraceptive delivery tool for humanitarian settings. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018 (<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/276553>).

### Giving EC pills<sup>20</sup>

#### 1. Give EC pill (or pills).

- ▶ The woman can take the pill or pills immediately.
- ▶ If she is using a two-dose regimen, tell her to take the next dose in 12 hours.

#### 2. Describe the most common side-effects.

- ▶ Nausea, abdominal pain, possibly others.
- ▶ Slight bleeding or change in timing of monthly bleeding.
- ▶ Side-effects are not signs of illness and they do not last long. Most women have no side-effects.

#### 3. Explain what to do about side-effects.

- ▶ Nausea:
  - Routine use of anti-nausea medications is not recommended. Women who have had nausea with previous EC pill use or with the first dose of a two-dose regimen can take anti-nausea medication such as 25–50 mg meclizine hydrochloride (e.g. Agyrax, Antivert, Bonine, Postafene) 30 minutes to 1 hour before taking EC pills.
- ▶ Vomiting:
  - If the woman vomits within 2 hours after taking a progestin-only or combined EC pill, she should take another dose. If she vomits within 3 hours of taking a UPA EC pill, she should take another dose. (She can use anti-nausea medication with this repeat dose, as above.) If vomiting continues, she can take a repeat dose of progestin-only or combined EC by placing the pills high in her vagina. If vomiting occurs more than 2 hours after taking a progestin-only or combined EC pill, or 3 hours after taking a UPA-EC pill, then she does not need to take any extra pills.

#### 4. Give more EC pills and talk to the woman about an ongoing method of contraceptive.

- ▶ If possible, and if she may need EC in the future, give her more EC pills to take home.
- ▶ Discuss possibilities for starting an ongoing method of contraception, if she is interested.

20 World Health Organization Department of Reproductive Health and Research, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communication Programs Knowledge for Health Project. Family planning: a global handbook for providers: 2018 edition. Geneva and Baltimore: World Health Organization and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; 2018 (<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/260156/9780999203705-eng.pdf>).

5. Follow-up.

- ▶ Encourage her to return for an early pregnancy test if her monthly bleeding is more than 7 days late.

**Use of a copper-bearing intrauterine device (IUD) as EC**

- ▶ If the survivor presents within 5 days after the rape (and if there was no earlier unprotected sexual act in this menstrual cycle), insertion of a copper-bearing IUD is an effective method of EC. It will prevent more than 99% of expected subsequent pregnancies.
- ▶ Women should be offered counselling on this method so as to reach an informed decision.
- ▶ A skilled provider should counsel the patient and insert the IUD. If an IUD is inserted, make sure to give full treatment for sexually transmitted infections (see Annex 8).
- ▶ The IUD may be removed at the time of the woman's next menstrual period or left in place for future contraception.

**Girls:**

- ▶ The protocol for EC provided in this annex can be applied to girls who have attained menarche (i.e. post-menarche), as well as those who are in the beginning stages of puberty (i.e. have reached Tanner stage 2 or 3) without any restrictions.