EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

Have you ever had a condom break, slip off or come off during sex?
Have you ever counted on "pulling out" but it didn't happen?
Have you ever had unprotected sex?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you should know about emergency contraception.

What is it?
Emergency contraception pills (ECPs), commonly referred to as "morning after pills," help prevent pregnancy after sexual intercourse. ECPs consist of doses of specific hormones, which should be taken within 5 days after unprotected intercourse. Emergency contraception pills are approved by the Food and Drug Administration, for purchase without a prescription if you are age 17 or older, and are 75-90% effective in preventing pregnancy.

What you should know:
There are 3.1 million unintended pregnancies in the United States every year; many could be prevented if women used emergency contraception. ECPs do not cause an abortion; it won't work if you are already pregnant, and studies have not found that it causes harm to a developing pregnancy. It is strongly recommended that, after taking ECPs, a regular method of birth control be used because these are more reliable and effective.

Where can you obtain emergency contraception?
Women (over age 17) or men can purchase ECP’s over the counter in the Student Health Pharmacy, or you can call 893-3371 to make an appointment if you would like a medical evaluation. Women 17 and under can make an appointment to get a prescription for ECP’s that can be filled at the Student Health Pharmacy. You may also contact the Advice Nurse at Student Health without charge, through confidential email on our GATEWAY at http://studenthealth.sa.ucsb.edu/ or at 893-7129. At times when Student Health Service is closed, other pharmacies and/or clinics in the community may offer emergency contraception. We suggest you purchase a package in advance since it is more effective the sooner it is taken.

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE PILLS (ECPs)
Instructions for Use

Take the emergency contraceptive pills (ECP) as directed on the package as soon as possible, but no later than 5 days after unprotected intercourse.

If you have more intercourse after taking ECPs, use condoms and spermicides until you get your period. Talk to your health care provider about other regular birth control methods you can use in the future.

Your next period may be a few days early or late. IMPORTANT: Do a pregnancy test or see your health care provider if your period has not started within 3 weeks after ECP treatment. There is a risk that ECP did not prevent pregnancy, and it will not terminate a pregnancy, so please seek medical care for any questions, and to help you start an ongoing method of birth control.