

Emergency contraception – Pharmacy job aid

1. Check client information

- ☐ Maintain client confidentiality – speak away from other customers (in a private room if available)
- ☐ Check relevant information with client in a respectful, non-judgmental manner
 - Medical and menstrual history (including current medications)
 - Age (parent or guardian consent required if <18 years old)
 - Last unprotected sex (EC is effective for up to 5 days after unprotected intercourse)

2. Offer emergency contraception (EC)

- ☐ Job aids and tools can help decide on the most appropriate EC option
 - E.g., Emergency Contraception Methods Wheel – <https://www.ec-ec.org/ecmethod/>

Key messages

- EC is safe and effective for women of all ages, including adolescents
- There are two EC options available in Fiji – the levonorgestrel (LNG) pill and copper intrauterine device (IUD)
- LNG is a Schedule 3 Pharmacist Only Medicine
 - 18 years and over – prescription not required
 - Under 18 years old – parent or guardian consent required

3. Provide counselling

- ☐ Provide guidance on how to use and potential side effects (see next page)
- ☐ If EC pills are used, advise patient to take a pregnancy test if their next monthly bleed is more than 7 days late or unusual in any way
- ☐ Discuss condom use to protect against HIV/STIs and future unplanned pregnancy
- ☐ Offer information on ongoing contraception, including condoms, oral contraceptive pills, and long-acting reversible contraception (LARC)

Key messages

- Take EC as soon as possible for it to be most effective
- EC pills work by stopping the release of an egg from the ovary – they do NOT cause an abortion
- EC pills may be used more than once in a menstrual cycle, but are not recommended as an ongoing method to prevent pregnancy
- EC does not protect against STIs/HIV – STI/HIV testing recommended if at risk

4. Follow up

- ☐ Encourage the patient to consult a contraception provider (e.g. RFHAF, MSP clinic) to discuss ongoing contraceptive options for preventing future unplanned pregnancies
- ☐ Refer as needed (e.g. STI/HIV testing, sexual and gender-based violence services, police)

Levonorgestrel (LNG)



Access	18 years and over – over the counter, prescription not required Under 18 years old – parent or guardian consent required
Time of use after unprotected sex	Up to 3 days (72 hours) Some evidence for efficacy up to 96 hours
How it works	Prevents or delays ovulation (the release of an egg from the ovary)
Directions for use (As soon as possible after unprotected sex)	1.5mg LNG – Take one pill 0.75mg LNG – Take two pills together Repeat if vomiting occurs within 3 hours after dose
Contraindications and medication interactions	There are no absolute medical contraindications Interaction with liver enzyme-inducing medications can reduce efficacy
Side effects	Very safe and effective Some people may experience mild short-term side effects including nausea, vomiting, fatigue, breast tenderness, headache, abdominal pain or changes in menstrual bleeding
Effectiveness	Around 85% effective with typical use Effectiveness decreases as time passes after unprotected sex
Good to know	Women with BMI ≥ 30 kg/m ² <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be less effective but no safety concerns Copper IUD is an option but LNG should still be offered if copper IUD is not available or wanted Double dose (off label) may improve effectiveness Multiple instances of unprotected sex Can be used – will not harm an existing pregnancy

Copper intrauterine device (IUD)



Access	Refer to appropriate health service – must be inserted by trained clinician
Time of use after unprotected sex	Up to 5 days (120 hours)
How it works	Prevents sperm from fertilising the egg
Directions for use	Requires appointment with a trained clinician to have the IUD inserted
Contraindications and medication interactions	Existing pregnancy or pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)
Side effects	May cause irregular or heavy menstrual bleeding and/or cramps
Effectiveness	>99% effective
Good to know	Can be used as ongoing contraception for up to 10 years