

Emergency Contraception - Clinical aspects

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Emergency contraception is defined as any drug or device which will prevent pregnancy after intercourse has taken place. Two hormonal methods (the YUZPE regimen and levonorgestrel alone), the IUD and, in China, mifepristone, have different efficacies, side effects and time limits. Paradoxically while EC is becoming much more widely used there is still a lot that we do not know. We can only estimate the effectiveness and we are uncertain as to exactly how it works. We are not sure that the hormonal methods really need to be given in two doses 12 hours apart and it is quite possible that the dose is higher than it need be. What we do know is that it is safe, and that for women to use it when they need it EC must be easily accessible. We also know that there are a great many barriers among both providers and users that need to be overcome if the use of EC is to become more widespread.