

August 2014

## Emergency contraceptive pills ('morning after' pills) suitable for all women, regardless of body weight

### Key messages

- Use an emergency contraceptive to prevent unintended pregnancy as soon as possible after unprotected sex or if your usual method of contraception has not worked
- Emergency contraceptives are suitable for all women, regardless of the woman's weight
- Do not use emergency contraceptives to replace a regular contraceptive method
- If your period is late or you have irregular bleeding after using an emergency contraceptive, use a pregnancy test
- Speak to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you have any concerns about emergency contraceptives



### What are emergency contraceptives and what do they do?

Emergency contraceptives are used to prevent unintended pregnancy. If you have sex without contraception (birth control) or your usual method of contraception has not worked (eg the condom breaks during sex) and you do not want to become pregnant, use emergency contraception as soon as possible.

Emergency contraceptive options include pills ('morning after pills') and intrauterine contraceptive devices (IUDs). An IUD is a small device that is inserted into your uterus (womb) by a healthcare professional.

### What is the new information for emergency contraceptives?

There was a review of studies that looked into whether emergency contraceptive pills work in overweight or obese women. The overall conclusion was that emergency contraceptive pills are suitable for all women, regardless of the woman's weight.

### What should I do if I need to use an emergency contraceptive?

Speak to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist as soon as possible. They can advise you on the best emergency contraceptive option for you. Some emergency contraceptive pills can be bought 'over the counter' in a pharmacy.

If your period is late or you have irregular bleeding after using an emergency contraceptive, use a pregnancy test.

Emergency contraceptives are for use in an emergency only. Do not use them to replace a regular contraceptive method. Your doctor, nurse, or family planning clinic can advise you on regular contraceptive methods which are more effective than emergency contraceptives.

### Reporting side effects

Please report any suspected side effects to any medicine or vaccine to the Yellow Card Scheme via the website [www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard](http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard) or by calling the free phone line 0800 731 6789. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of medicines.