

INFORMATION FOR NEW YORK STATE PHARMACISTS AND PHARMACY STAFF

Plan B® – Helping Teenagers Prevent Unintended Pregnancy

Now that Plan B® is a dual label product—prescription for women 17 years and younger and over-the-counter for women and men 18 years and older—the pharmacy may be the first stop for a teen trying to prevent an unintended pregnancy. Teens may seek help at a pharmacy before calling another health care provider because pharmacies are conveniently located and are open evenings and weekends when health centers and doctors' offices are closed.

Pharmacists can help adolescents access Plan B® emergency contraception (EC) quickly, which is important because the sooner Plan B® is taken after unprotected sex, the more effective it is. Pharmacists can help teens get a prescription if they don't have one. They can educate teens about the medication, and when affordability is an issue, they can refer women to places that offer Plan B® for free or at low cost. This fact sheet is designed to answer some questions pharmacists may have about providing Plan B® to teens.

Why do teens need access to Plan B®?

In New York State, there are approximately 40,000 teen pregnancies each year.¹ Over three quarters (78%) of these pregnancies are unplanned including many pregnancies that result from forced sex.² Plan B® has the potential to significantly reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies and abortions.

Is Plan B® safe for teens?

Plan B® is an emergency contraception product that is a safe and reliable way to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex or birth control failure.

Yes. Plan B® was first approved by the FDA as safe and effective for use by all women of reproductive age. In 2006, the FDA approved Plan B® for over-

the-counter sale for consumers ages 18 years and older but kept it a prescription product for women ages 17 years and younger. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Society for Adolescent Medicine support over-the-counter availability for minors, a further endorsement of the drug's safety.^{3,4}

Will teens use Plan B® instead of more effective methods?

Research has shown that giving Plan B® to teenage women in advance of need does not result in routine use.⁵ A randomized trial of 301 sexually active

teens conducted by Gold et al. (2004) showed that advance provision of EC had no detrimental effect on use of condoms or hormonal contraception and it did not increase unprotected sex. Pharmacists may encounter teens who obtain refills for Plan B®. There are circumstances under which this is entirely appropriate such as inexperience with condoms, infrequent sex, or forced sex.

When teens purchase Plan B®, do I need to check ID?

Consumers who want to purchase Plan B® without a prescription must be 18 or older. Examples of acceptable proof of age include a driver's license, a non-driver photo ID, and any government-issued ID such as a passport. There is nothing in regulation requiring a photo ID. ID without a photo should include name and date of birth. Of course, no ID is needed for purchase of Plan B® with a prescription.

Should I counsel teens who purchase Plan B®?

If any consumer requests counseling, it is appropriate to tell them how to take the medication, possible side effects, and recommended follow-up care. Information provided at the end of this fact sheet can help prepare you to respond to the questions teens may ask.

How should I respond to parents of minors who ask why a Plan B® prescription was filled?

Tell the parent that privacy laws prevent pharmacists from discussing patient information with another person – even a parent or guardian. All minors in New York have a right to confidential family planning services and products, including Plan B®.

What do other staff in my pharmacy need to know about Plan B®?

Store clerks and pharmacy technicians may be a teen's first point of contact about Plan B®. This is not only because they are often more visible to customers but because they may be closer in age and seem more approachable. Be sure that pharmacy staff have basic information about Plan B® and know that it is stocked behind the pharmacy counter.

Can men purchase Plan B®?

Yes. Plan B® can be sold over-the-counter to men (and women) 18 years and older.

Can men or teens (e.g. a boyfriend or sister) pick up a prescription for the patient?

Anyone is allowed to pick up a prescription. However, only the patient can request a refill for a prescription product.⁶

How can my pharmacy make Plan B® more accessible to teens?

Adolescents often face multiple barriers to accessing contraceptive information and services. Barriers may be cultural, financial, legal, psychological, and/or social. The following are some ways you can help them overcome these barriers. Resources referenced here can be found on the resource list at the end of this fact sheet.

- **Privacy and confidentiality** are of utmost concern to teens. If possible, have a private space where they can request Plan B® and ask questions. It is important for teens to know that pharmacists will not disclose confidential information to parents or guardians.
- If a patient 17 years or younger wants Plan B® but does not have a prescription, help them by calling their health care provider for a prescription or referring them to a **family planning center or one of the hotlines** with names of local health care providers who prescribe Plan B® (in NYC call 311, statewide call 1-888-NOT-2-LATE).
- Plan B® can be expensive for a teen. If the young woman has Medicaid, let her know that it covers prescription Plan B®. Medicaid will also cover over-the-counter (OTC) Plan B® without a fiscal order for women over 18. Use **MMIS prescriber ID# 02833383** for Plan B® without a fiscal order. Medicaid covers six courses of therapy in any 12-month period for prescription and OTC Plan B®. If the teens do not have Medicaid and they cannot afford Plan B®, let them know there are places they can obtain it for free or low cost (e.g., family planning centers and, in NYC, Department of Health STD Clinics).
- Asking about Plan B® may be very embarrassing for teens. **Help them start a conversation** by wearing buttons, or displaying signs that say “Ask Me About EC.” There are also little cards that can be handed to the pharmacist with the message “Dear Pharmacist, I would like to know more about Plan B® in a confidential way.” (See the resource list for places to obtain teen-oriented materials.)
- Many young women experience **sexual and/or domestic violence**. Know how to help them without putting them at further risk. (See *Plan B® & Women who are Victims of Sexual and/or Domestic Violence*, a fact sheet for pharmacists on www.fpaofnys.org.) If asked, refer women to the domestic and sexual violence hotline **1-800-942-6906**. Keep the phone number of the local rape crisis center handy.

PLAN B® COUNSELING

Teens may have many questions about Plan B®, even if they are too shy to ask. This information can help you counsel them.

• Dose and Administration

The Plan B® package contains a single, 2-dose course of treatment. Each dose contains 0.75 mg of levonorgestrel. The package label instructs patients to take the first tablet of Plan B® orally as soon as possible and within 72 hours (3 days) after unprotected intercourse and take the next tablet 12 hours after the first.

• Efficacy

Overall, progestin-only pills prevent 85% of pregnancies that would have been expected without the medication. The sooner the medication is taken, the more effective it is.⁷ If taken within 24 hours, Plan B® will prevent 95% of the expected number of pregnancies.

• Side Effects

A small proportion of women experience side effects but they are not serious and pass quickly such as nausea (23%), vomiting (6%), abdominal pain (18%), diarrhea (5%), fatigue (17%), headache (17%), breast tenderness (11%), spotting or bleeding, heavier menstrual bleeding (14%), lighter menstrual bleeding (13%).⁸ Some experts consider that if a woman vomits as a result of taking Plan B®, there is enough hormone in her bloodstream to have the desired effect. Other experts including ACOG recommend that if vomiting occurs within 30 – 60 minutes of taking either dose, the dose should be repeated.⁹

• Contraindications

Plan B® does not work if the woman is already pregnant. She should not take Plan B® if she is allergic to levonorgestrel or any ingredients in Plan B®.¹⁰ There are no known adverse effects to a woman or her developing fetus if the woman takes Plan B® accidentally when she is already pregnant.¹¹

• Follow up

If menstruation is delayed more than a week after it is normally expected, the woman may want to take a pregnancy test. Plan B® does not protect against HIV or other sexually transmitted infections, therefore, you may want to recommend that she consider following up with a health care practitioner for HIV/STI testing.

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Endnotes

1. Vital Statistics of New York State 2004. Table 30 Total Pregnancies and Teenage Pregnancies by Type and Resident County.

2. According to a government report, almost 10% of women experienced an attempted or completed rape when they were younger than 18 years of age. Tjaden P and Thoennes N, 2000, *Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women, Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.

3. American Academy of Pediatrics. Policy Statement. Emergency Contraception. *Contraception*, 2005, 116(4):1038-1047.

4. Society for Adolescent Medicine. Position Paper. Provision of emergency contraception to adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 2004, 35: 66-70.

5. Gold MA, Wolford JE, Smith KA, Parker AM. The effects of advance provision of emergency contraception on adolescent women's sexual and contraceptive behaviors. *J Pediatr Adolesc Gynecol*, 2004, 17:87-96.

6. Pharmacy Access Partnership. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Pharmacists about Pharmacy Access to Emergency Contraception (2007). Retrieved from www.pharmacyaccess.org, 5/11/07.

7. Society for Adolescent Medicine (see above).

8. US FDA. Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. Application Number 21-045/S011. Printed Labeling. Retrieved from http://www.fda.gov/cder/foi/nda/2006/021045s11_planb.htm, 6/13/07.

9. American Academy of Pediatrics (see above).

10. Colloidal silicon dioxide, potato starch, gelatin, magnesium stearate, talc, corn starch, lactose monohydrate.

11. Grimes DA, Raymond EG. Emergency Contraception. *Ann Intern Med*, 2002, 137:180-189.

Emergency Contraception Resources for Pharmacists

Information about Plan B® and other EC products (English, Spanish, French, Arabic)	www.go2planB.com , www.go2ec.com , www.not-2-late.com
EC providers in the US and Canada	www.not-2-late.com or 1-888-NOT-2-LATE
EC providers in New York City including STD clinics	Call 311
Family planning centers in New York	www.plannedparenthood.org or 1-800-230-PLAN Growing Up Healthy Hotline: 1-800-522-5006 or TTY 1-800-655-1789
NYS HIV/AIDS Information Services	1-800-541-2437
NYS Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline	1-800-942-6906 (English) 1-800-942-6908 (Spanish)
Information, referral, and programs for victims of sexual assault	www.nyscasa.org
Resources and referrals for victims of domestic violence	www.nyscadv.org
Policy and Practice Issues	
New York State Board of Pharmacy	518-474-3817, ext. 130
Pharmacists Society of the State of New York	1-800-632-8822
New York State Council of Health-system Pharmacists	1-518-456-8819
Continuing Education Programs:	
Pharmacy Access Partnership	www.pharmacyaccess.learnsomething.com
American Pharmaceutical Association	www.pharmacist.com/pdf/emergency_contra.pdf
Clinical Directors Network	www.cdnetwork.org (see pharmaceutical access)
<i>U.S. Pharmacist</i> (January 2007)	Emergency Contraception: A Guide to Over-the-Counter Availability
Fact Sheets for New York State Pharmacists and Pharmacy Staff	www.fpaofnys.org/resources/other/index.asp
Plan B® – Now An Over-The-Counter & Prescription Product	
Plan B® & Women Who Are Victims of Sexual and/or Domestic Violence	
Fact Sheet for Consumers	
Plan B® is Now Over-The-Counter! What New York Consumers Need to Know	
Teen-Oriented Emergency Contraception Materials	www.advocatesforyouth.org/youth/health/pamphlets/ecps.htm Harlem Health Promotion Center, http://www.ec123.org/index.html http://www.pharmacyaccess.org/pdfs/ClientConfidentialityCard.pdf for an innovative way to facilitate discreet communication between pharmacy patrons and pharmacists. The award-winning Planned Parenthood website gives teens information about EC and many other issues related to sexuality and relationships: http://www.teenwire.com



Family Planning Advocates of New York State

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