

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid Emergency contraception is 75% effective in preventing pregnancy up to 5 days after unprotected intercourse. Call Campus Health at 621-9202. Nights & weekends, call 570-7898.

Q. My girlfriend doesn't go to the UA. Is it possible for a guy to get the "day after pill" from the pharmacy for my girlfriend? Thanks.

A. No, as a guy, you can't get emergency contraception (EC) for your girlfriend. A medical provider must prescribe it for her. She can contact her doctor, Planned Parenthood, or an urgent care center.

Emergency contraception is not the "abortion pill". EC pills contain hormones used in birth control pills that reduce the risk of pregnancy if started within 120 hours of unprotected intercourse. Experts estimate that wider access to EC could prevent 1.7 million unintended pregnancies and 800,000 abortions every year in the United States.

At press time, we are anticipating the ruling of the Food and Drug Administration to make emergency contraception available over-the-counter (without prescription). The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Academy of Pediatrics and Society for Adolescent Medicine support unrestricted over-the-counter access to EC. Opponents are trying to stop the approval process.

Q. I was diagnosed with mucopurulent cervicitis. That sounds bad. The nurse practitioner gave me antibiotics. Do I have a sexually transmitted disease?

A. Maybe or maybe not. Cervicitis is an inflammation of the uterine cervix. It means that your cervix is irritated and discharging abnormal fluid.

Serious cases of cervicitis may be caused by infections such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, trichomonas, herpes simplex virus, or human papillomavirus, and sometimes by other organisms like streptococcus (strep). If the cervix is irritated by a cervical cap or diaphragm, even normal vaginal bacteria can cause cervicitis. It's very important to diagnose and treat cervicitis. The good news is that proper treatment will cure an infection.

Q. Can I have intercourse while I'm being treated for an infection?

A. It is better not to. Intercourse may be uncomfortable or painful. It may also aggravate your symptoms and interfere with the effectiveness of treatment. If you and your partner are being treated for an infection, you may re-infect one another. Be sure to use condoms or female condoms if you do decide to have sex during treatment.

Helpful links: ashastd.org/stdfaqs/vaginitis, emedicine.com and plannedparenthood.org

Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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