



# What Consumers Need to Know about Getting Plan B® (Emergency Contraception) Without a Prescription

## Plan B® (Emergency Contraception or EC) is:

- A type of birth control pill that you can take to prevent pregnancy after sex
- Sometimes called the “morning-after” pill
- Safe and effective. It is more effective the sooner you use it.

## Plan B is NOT:

- Plan B should not take the place of other types of birth control like “the pill,” condoms, the birth control shot, etc. Plan B is about 89% effective.
- Plan B is NOT the abortion pill or RU-486. It will not work if you are already pregnant. It will not hurt your body or your pregnancy if you took it before you knew you were pregnant.
- Plan B will NOT protect you against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS. Use condoms every time you have sex to protect yourself against STDs and HIV/AIDS.

## Where can I get EC?

### Women ages 18 and older with ID:

- Beginning in mid- November, 2006, you can buy Plan B without a prescription from your pharmacist. Go to the pharmacy counter at your local drug store.
- From a doctor or health care provider. Go to [www.massECnetwork.org/wheretogot](http://www.massECnetwork.org/wheretogot) or call 617-624-6060 (M-F, 9-5) for a list of family planning clinics in Massachusetts.

### Women under 18 or women without ID:

- From a specially trained pharmacist participating in the EC pharmacy access program. Go to [www.massECnetwork.org](http://www.massECnetwork.org) for a list of participating pharmacies.
- From a doctor or health care provider. Go to [www.massECnetwork.org/wheretogot](http://www.massECnetwork.org/wheretogot) or call 617-624-6060 (M-F, 9-5) for a list of family planning clinics in Massachusetts.
- Teens in Massachusetts are guaranteed confidential, low-cost family planning services, including EC.

### Men:

- Beginning in mid-November, 2006, men ages 18 and older can buy Plan B without a prescription from their pharmacist. Men under 18 can NOT get a prescription for Plan B, even through pharmacy access.

## When will Plan B be available over-the-counter in pharmacies?

- Plan B will be available in mid-November, 2006, for sale over-the-counter.
- Until then, all women can still get a prescription for Plan B from their doctor, clinic, or health care provider and can get it filled at any pharmacy.
- Women can also go to a specially trained pharmacist participating in the EC pharmacy access program without needing to go to a doctor or clinic first. Go to [www.massECnetwork.org](http://www.massECnetwork.org) for a list of participating pharmacies.

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### **Will Plan B be on the shelf with other over-the-counter products, like condoms?**

- No. Plan B will be kept behind the pharmacist counter. You will need to show ID to prove you are over 18 to get Plan B.

### **How much does EC cost?**

- Plan B currently costs from \$20-\$50 as a prescription product. The price for Plan B over-the-counter has not been decided and may vary at different pharmacies.
- MassHealth will help pay for Plan B, but only if you buy it with a prescription from a doctor or specially trained pharmacist. If you have other insurance, ask your pharmacist if your insurance company will help pay for Plan B.

### **What does over-the-counter mean?**

- Over-the-counter means that you can buy Plan B from a pharmacy without a prescription. The FDA has decided that it is safe enough to use without talking to a doctor or health care provider first. In this case, the FDA decided to make Plan B available over-the-counter only to women and men ages 18 and older. You will need to show ID at the pharmacist counter to get Plan B.

### **What is the Massachusetts pharmacy access law and how is it different from over-the-counter access?**

- The Massachusetts pharmacy access law allows specially trained pharmacists to decide if Plan B is right for a particular woman. She does not need to visit her doctor or health care provider first, but Plan B will be provided as a prescription product. For a list of participating pharmacies in Massachusetts, go to [www.massECnetwork.org](http://www.massECnetwork.org).
- Over-the-counter access allows all women and men ages 18 and older to buy Plan B without a prescription.
- Women who are unable to buy Plan B over-the-counter can still benefit from pharmacy access to Plan B.

### **Is Plan B safe for teens under 18?**

- Yes. Plan B is safe for women of all ages.
- Research shows that easier access to Plan B does NOT increase sexual risk-taking and does NOT reduce the use of regular on-going birth control.

*If you were raped or forced to have sex, you can call the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center at 1-800-841-8371 (English) or Llamamos Y Hablemos at 1-800-223-5001 (Spanish) for help.*

*Adapted in part from the Pharmacy Access Partnership ([www.pharmacyaccess.org](http://www.pharmacyaccess.org)).*