



## EC Information for Pharmacists

### What you need to know about Plan B® OTC

On August 24, 2006, the FDA approved Plan B, the dedicated emergency contraception (EC) product, for over-the-counter (OTC) sales to consumers ages 18 and older. The OTC product will be available starting in November, 2006. Plan B will be kept behind the pharmacist counter and not on store shelves. Consumers will need to show proof of age to get Plan B.

Emergency contraception (EC) is a safe and effective way to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex. EC can be used up to 5 days after unprotected sex, but the sooner it is used, the more effective it is. EC is not the abortion pill (mifepristone or RU-486) and will not harm an already existing pregnancy.

#### What options will consumers have to access EC?

##### Women ages 18 and older with ID:

- Plan B is authorized for OTC sale in pharmacies and will be available beginning in November, 2006, *or*
- From a local doctor or health care provider. Go to [www.massECnetwork.org/wheretogot/](http://www.massECnetwork.org/wheretogot/) for a list of family planning clinics in Mass.
- MassHealth will only cover Plan B with a prescription from a health care provider or specially trained pharmacist. For other insurance, check with the insurance company to determine whether a prescription is required for coverage.

##### Women under 18 or women without ID:

- Through a specially trained pharmacist participating in the EC pharmacy access law. Go to [www.massECnetwork.org](http://www.massECnetwork.org) for a list of participating pharmacies, *or*
- From a local doctor or health care provider. Go to [www.massECnetwork.org/wheretogot/](http://www.massECnetwork.org/wheretogot/) for a list of family planning clinics in Mass.
- Teens in Massachusetts are guaranteed confidential family planning services, including EC.

##### Men:

- Men ages 18 and older can purchase Plan B OTC in pharmacies beginning in November, 2006. Men under 18 do NOT have the option to obtain a prescription for Plan B, nor to get it through pharmacy access.

#### What is the difference between OTC access and pharmacy access under the Massachusetts law?

- OTC access allows all women and men ages 18 and older to purchase Plan B without a prescription.
- The Massachusetts pharmacy access law allows specially trained pharmacists with a standing order from a physician to assess the appropriateness of EC for a particular woman and initiate a prescription. She does not need to visit her health care provider or clinic first, but Plan B will be provided as a prescription product. For a list of participating pharmacies, go to [www.massECnetwork.org](http://www.massECnetwork.org). See the back of this flyer for instructions on how to sign up.
- Women who are unable to buy Plan B over-the-counter can still benefit from pharmacy access.

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## Is EC safe for teens under 18?

- Yes. There is no medical reason to restrict access to EC for teens.
- Research shows that easier access to EC does NOT increase sexual risk taking and does NOT reduce the use of regular on-going birth control.

## Why should pharmacists provide pharmacy access to EC under the Mass. law if it's now OTC?

- Pharmacy access is still an important service in the prevention of unintended pregnancy.
- It allows pharmacists to offer expanded access to EC for women who are not eligible for OTC access, including women under 18 or those without proper ID.
- Providing pharmacy access means that you will not have to turn women away from your pharmacy who are seeking EC to prevent an unintended pregnancy.

## When will Plan B be available for sale OTC?

- The manufacturer has indicated that they will begin shipping Plan B in the new OTC packaging beginning Nov. 1, 2006.
- Meanwhile, women with a prescription for EC can get it filled at any pharmacy. They can also go directly to a specially trained pharmacist participating in the Massachusetts pharmacy access law without needing an advance prescription. Go to [www.massECnetwork.org](http://www.massECnetwork.org) for a list of participating pharmacies.

### I want to offer EC pharmacy access at my pharmacy. What do I do? Signing up to participate is as easy as 1 – 2 – 3!

#### 1) Complete a training program

- Online training available through Northeastern University at [http://www.neu.ceedutest.com/ce\\_ec/](http://www.neu.ceedutest.com/ce_ec/).
- Or go to the Massachusetts EC Network website at [www.massECnetwork.org](http://www.massECnetwork.org) for information on live training programs.

#### 2) Obtain a standing order

- The EC Network can connect you with a physician who is available to sign standing orders. Please contact Stacie Garnett at [stacie@prochoicemass.org](mailto:stacie@prochoicemass.org) or 617-556-8800 x15.
- A generic standing order is also available at [http://mass.gov/dph/dhcq/emergency\\_contraception.htm](http://mass.gov/dph/dhcq/emergency_contraception.htm)

#### 3) File with the Board of Pharmacy and EC Network

- Send a copy of your signed standing order by certified mail to the Board of Pharmacy at 239 Causeway St. Ste 200, Boston, MA 02114.
- Fax the EC Network website registration form to 617-338-2532 to indicate that your pharmacy participates and to be listed on the EC Network website.
- You are ready to dispense!

## How can I find more information?

- Go to the EC Network website at [www.massECnetwork.org](http://www.massECnetwork.org) or contact Stacie Garnett at [stacie@prochoicemass.org](mailto:stacie@prochoicemass.org) or 617-556-8800 x15.

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