

SHFPA STATEMENT on EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

September 2011

SHFPA medical leaders have reviewed recent evidence in relation to levonorgestrel emergency contraception (LNG-EC), available in Australia in pharmacies as an S3 product. Previous advice was that while LNG-EC was approved up to 72 hours, it had some efficacy up to 120 hours but was more effective the earlier it was taken after unprotected sexual intercourse (UPSI).

A recent analysis combined the results of several large trials and reviewed effectiveness for each day up to 5 days after UPSI. SHFPA has altered its advice in keeping with this evidence as has the recently released Guidance of the UK Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Health Clinical Effectiveness Unit.

SHFPA 2011 guidance:

Whilst LNG-EC is approved for use up to 72 hours after unprotected intercourse, it has proven efficacy up to 96 hours (4 days). There is some evidence that efficacy is improved the earlier the LNG-EC method is given in relation to UPSI. While LNG-EC can be given up to the fifth day post UPSI, there is greater than a five times increase in risk of pregnancy compared to administration within the first 24 hours.

1. SH&FPA, *Contraception: an Australian clinical practice handbook*, ed 2. 2009, Canberra.
2. Rodrigues, I., F. Grou, and J. Joly, *Effectiveness of emergency contraceptive pills between 72 and 120 hours after unprotected sexual intercourse*. *Am J Obstet Gynecol*, 2001. **184**(4): p. 531-7.
3. Piaggio, G., et al., *Timing of emergency contraception with levonorgestrel or the Yuzpe regimen. Task Force on Postovulatory Methods of Fertility Regulation*. *Lancet*, 1999. **353**(9154): p. 721.
4. Piaggio, G., N. Kapp, and H. von Hertzen, *Effect on pregnancy rates of the delay in the administration of levonorgestrel for emergency contraception: a combined analysis of four WHO trials*. *Contraception*, 2011. **84**(1): p. 35-9.
5. Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare Clinical Effectiveness Unit, *Emergency Contraception*. 2011.