



MEDIA RELEASE
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What to know about emergency contraception

Emergency contraception has been available over-the-counter through Australian pharmacies without a prescription since 2004. However, many young people don't know much about it.

"Published research and anecdotal evidence indicates that many young women don't know how it works or how to access it," explains Family Planning Queensland (FPQ) education officer Chris Payze.

To remedy this, a Cairns interagency group are releasing a wallet card and factsheet about emergency contraception aimed at young women in the region. The group is also working closely with pharmacies to enhance their services to young women.

A recent Queensland Health and FPQ study of emergency contraception in the Cairns and Hinterland District found that pharmacies are comfortable with their role in emergency contraception provision, have a positive attitude to dispensing it and a desire to provide a confidential youth friendly environment for clients.

Forty-six (88%) of the 52 local pharmacies participated; only three did not provide any over-the-counter emergency contraception.

"One of the findings of the research was that there were few printed resources available about this safe, back-up form of contraception," said Payze. "This prompted us to develop the wallet card and factsheet."

Also wrongly known as the 'morning after pill,' emergency contraception is still relatively effective up to five days after unprotected sex, although it's more effective the sooner it is taken. Young women can discuss ongoing contraception and safe sex with their GP, Family Planning Queensland or Cairns Sexual Health service.

Copies of the emergency contraception factsheet and wallet cards are available from the Cairns Sexual Health Service, 381 Sheridan Street and FPQ Cairns, 182 Grafton Street, and are being distributed to local pharmacies.

For more information, please contact Janelle Weissman on 0423 408 830.

Information about safe sex, contraception and emergency contraception is available online at www.fpq.com.au and www.istaysafe.com.