

Emergency contraceptives widely available in Alamance

Jessica Patchett
Editor in Chief

Emergency contraceptives are widely available and accessible to women in Alamance County, despite regulations prohibiting over-the-counter dispensing of the drug.

Emergency contraceptives can prevent pregnancy if taken within 72 - 120 hours after unprotected sex. The pills are administered in two high bursts of hormones, stopping a fertilized egg from implanting.

One of the most popular misconceptions about ECPs, according to Katherine Parrish, director of student health services at Elon, is that they terminate pregnancies. In fact, women should not take ECPs if they are pregnant, as exposure to hormones could damage a fetus. Ellington Health Center dispenses ECPs on-site to students for \$15, following a medical consultation.

Women should consider obtaining emergency contraceptives if other contraceptives failed or were not used, according to Parrish.

According to several local medical workers, ECPs are generally safe. Side effects usually include irregular periods, nausea and/or vomiting, headache, breast tenderness, dizziness and fluid retention.

Kendra Ginger, a medical center assistant at Planned Parenthood in Greensboro, said frequent use of

these high hormone drugs, some a combination of estrogen and progestin, others progestin only, can cause blood clots, heart attack, liver damage and high blood pressure. Planned Parenthood accepts walk-ins and dispenses ECPs for \$35.

"A myth is that people use it as a form of birth control," Ginger said. "Most people are eager to start a birth control."

Ellington Health Center nurses give ECPs to patients only twice.

"It's for the safety of the students," Parrish said.

Alternatives to the Ellington Health Center and Planned Parenthood include visiting an OBGYN, the Alamance County Health Department or a family practitioner. However, to visit many of these practices, women would need to become a patient, undergo a physical exam, a consultation and be prescribed the medication - which can range anywhere from \$50-\$150 for office visits in addition to \$20-\$30 for the medications. Prescriptions written by practitioners can be filled at local drug stores such as CVS and Eckerd. Wal-Mart, however, is under a national policy not to dispense emergency contraceptives.

Contact Jessica Patchett at pendulum@elon.edu or 278-7247.

Provider	Office hours	Procedure	Drug available	Cost of visit / medication	Before you go ...	Contact information
Ellington Health Center	M-T 8:30 - 6 F 8:30 - 4 Sat 9 - 1	walk - in; consultation; distribution	Plan B	no visit fee \$15 medication	patient may only obtain meds twice	278 - 7230
Planned Parenthood Greensboro	M 9-7 W 10-7 Tu 9-1 F 8:30 -5 S 9-1	walk - in; consultation; distribution	Plan B	no visit fee \$35 medication	can assist in starting birth control	373 - 0678
Planned Parenthood Hotline	24 hours / day	call - in; prescription by phone	Prescription upon local availability	no visit fee	service not available everywhere	866-942-7762
Westside OBGYN Burlington	M - F 8 - 5	appointment; consultation; prescription	Plan B	\$50 - \$120 office visit	will undergo a physical examination	538 - 1880
Alamance County Health Department	M - F 8 - 5	physical exam; consultation; by prescription	not released	cost determined by income and a sliding fee	must become a regular patient	570 - 6418
Alamance Regional Medical Center	24 hours / day	only considers victims of sexual assault	not released	\$300 - \$400 ER visit	visit only if other options are exhausted	538 - 7416
CVS	M - S 8 - 12pm Sun 10 - 7	prescription necessary; pick-up	Plan B only	\$28.99	drug store option can be expensive if added to the cost of an office visit.	227 - 7442
Eckerd	M - S 9 - 9 Sun 12 - 7	prescription necessary; pick-up	Preven only	\$17.99 / \$20	do not have hotline or md call-in here	227 - 5506
Wal-MARt Mart	M - F 9 - 9 S 9 - 7 S 11 - 4	does not carry emergency contraceptives	does not carry ECPs	--		584 - 1133

ECP	Corporation	Hormones	Dosage	Effectiveness	Side effects
Plan B	Womens Capital	progestin	2 pills, 1 each 12 hrs	89% within 72 hrs	Nausea,dizziness
Preven	Gynetics	progestin, estrogen	4 pills, 2 each 12 hrs	75% within 72 hrs	Vomiting,tenderness

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