

# INFORMATION FOR NEW YORK STATE PHARMACISTS AND PHARMACY STAFF

## Plan B<sup>®</sup> – now an over-the-counter & prescription product

**O**n August 24, 2006, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Plan B<sup>®</sup> as an over-the-counter (OTC) product for women 18 and older.

Pharmacists who stock Plan B<sup>®</sup> provide a crucial service for women trying to prevent a pregnancy within the short window of time when emergency contraception is effective.

Below are some of the most frequently asked questions about how to provide Plan B<sup>®</sup> in pharmacies as an OTC product. The answers represent the most current information available.

### WHAT IS PLAN B<sup>®</sup>?

- Plan B<sup>®</sup> is an emergency contraception (EC) product that is a safe and reliable way to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex or birth control failure.
- Plan B<sup>®</sup> contains the hormone levonorgestrel, the same hormone found in commonly prescribed birth control pills. The difference is that Plan B<sup>®</sup> contains a larger dose of levonorgestrel than the amount found in a single birth control pill. Plan B<sup>®</sup> packages contain a single 2-dose course of treatment.
- To obtain optimal efficacy, the first tablet should be taken as soon as possible within 72 hours (3 days) of sexual intercourse. The second tablet must be taken 12 hours later.
- Plan B<sup>®</sup> WILL NOT cause an abortion; it is NOT the “abortion pill” mifepristone, or RU-486. Plan B<sup>®</sup> will not work if a woman is already pregnant from a previous sexual encounter. If the woman is already pregnant when she takes EC, the developing fetus will not be harmed.
- Plan B<sup>®</sup> DOES NOT prevent HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

### How can consumers access Plan B<sup>®</sup>?

*Consumers 18 and older*  
**No prescription needed**

Plan B<sup>®</sup> is authorized for OTC sale in pharmacies to women and men ages 18 and older. Consumers can also obtain Plan B<sup>®</sup> in family planning and other health clinics. In New York City, women can get Plan B<sup>®</sup> in Health Department STD clinics (see resource page).

*Women 17 and younger*  
**A prescription is required**

In order to obtain Plan B<sup>®</sup>, women 17 years and younger must have a prescription from a person authorized to prescribe, pursuant to Title VIII of the New York State Education Law.

### Storage and Sale of Plan B<sup>®</sup> OTC

*Must Plan B<sup>®</sup> be kept behind the pharmacy counter?*

Yes. A pharmacist or staff with access to these products can provide it to consumers 18 and

older with acceptable proof of age. Individual pharmacies will have systems in place to confirm the age of Plan B<sup>®</sup> customers. The FDA requires that a health care professional must be available to answer questions if needed, but anyone behind the pharmacy counter will be able to sell or provide Plan B<sup>®</sup> OTC after seeing proof of age.

*What is an acceptable proof of age?*

Any government-issued identification can be accepted. Examples of acceptable proof of age include a driver's license, a non-driver photo ID, school ID, and passport. There is nothing in regulation requiring a photo ID. ID without a photo should include name and date of birth.

*Will I need to request proof of age from a consumer who is clearly over age 18?*

Pharmacies may implement their own policies.

*Will documentation of the type of ID accepted or anything else about the sale be required?*

No, the law does not require documentation.

*What if a customer does not have an ID?*

Women should be referred to a health practitioner or clinic to obtain a prescription. Because Plan B® is most effective when taken within the 24 hours after unprotected sex, it is helpful for pharmacists to assist the woman in obtaining a prescription that can be called into the pharmacy from a health provider in the community.

*How should pharmacists (and doctors) respond to parents of minors who may want to know why an EC prescription was filled?*

All minors in New York have a right to confidential family planning services and products including Plan B®. In addition, patient privacy is assured through the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

## **Prescriptions for Plan B®**

*Has the FDA limited the number of times a woman can take Plan B®?*

The FDA has not limited the number of times women can take Plan B®

*Why do health practitioners write advance prescriptions for Plan B®?*

Health practitioners may give a woman a prescription for Plan B® so that she will be able to fill it quickly if she needs it. Prescribers may also authorize refills. Plan B® is safe and effective for emergency contraception, but it is less effective than using a regular birth control method correctly and consistently.

*Will Medicaid pay for Plan B®?*

Yes. Plan B® can be dispensed as an OTC drug without a fiscal order to women 18 years of age and older. Medicaid coverage will be limited to six courses of therapy in any 12-month period for any Plan B® prescription and non-prescription combination. Use the following MMIS prescriber ID# for Plan B® dispensed without a fiscal order: 02833383.

*Will health insurance pay for Plan B®?*

Some health insurance plans will pay for Plan B®, others will not.

## **Education and Training**

*Is special training required for pharmacists and other staff in order to provide Plan B®?*

No. However, pharmacists and staff are expected to be informed about Plan B® to provide accurate information to consumers when needed. (See the resource page for websites that offer on-line EC training with continuing education credits for pharmacists and other health care professionals. Training programs are also offered at schools of pharmacy.)

*Do I need to provide counseling or give fact sheets to customers who purchase Plan B®?*

If the consumer requests it, counseling is required when this product is dispensed by prescription. When Plan B® is provided as an OTC product to those 18 years of age or older, counseling is not required because the packaging contains specific information approved by the FDA. Of course, pharmacists who may be dispensing other medications must follow standard procedures for providing consultation. The pharmacy may also voluntarily distribute educational information about Plan B® or referral information, for example, family planning providers, and services to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence (see resource page).

*How can I obtain educational materials about Plan B® for customers?*

You can find a fact sheet for New York State consumers on the website of Family Planning Advocates of NYS, [www.fpaofnys.org](http://www.fpaofnys.org). You can also order free educational materials such as posters and patient brochures by calling the Plan B® Information Center at 1-800-330-1271.

## **Increasing Access to EC**

*What can pharmacists do?*

- Stock Plan B®.
- Let consumers know that EC is available at the pharmacy.
- Educate store staff about EC and let them know the pharmacy has it.
- Post the resource page in a convenient place.

# Emergency Contraception Resources for Pharmacists

## Resources

## Contact Information

Information about Plan B® and other EC products  
(*English, Spanish, French, Arabic*)

[www.go2planB.com](http://www.go2planB.com), [www.go2ec.com](http://www.go2ec.com),  
[www.not-2-late.com](http://www.not-2-late.com)

Free posters and brochures for consumers  
(*English and Spanish*)

Plan B® Information Center: **1-800-330-1271**

EC providers in the US and Canada

[www.not-2-late.com](http://www.not-2-late.com) or **1-888-NOT-2-LATE**

EC providers in New York City including STD clinics

**Call 311**

Family planning clinics in New York

[www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org) or **1-800-230-PLAN**  
**Growing Up Healthy Hotline:**  
**1-800-522-5006** or **TTY 1-800-655-1789**

NYS HIV/AIDS Information Services

**1-800-541-2437**

NYS Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline

**1-800-942-6906** (*English*),  
**1-800-942-6908** (*Spanish*)

Information, referral, and programs  
for victims of sexual assault

[www.nyscasa.org](http://www.nyscasa.org)

Information and referrals  
for victims of domestic violence

[www.nyscadv.org](http://www.nyscadv.org)

Policy and Practice Issues

New York State Board of Pharmacy

**518-474-3817, ext. 130**

Pharmacists Society of the State of New York

**1-800-632-8822**

New York State Council of

Health-system Pharmacists

**1-518-456-8819**

On-line training:

Pharmacy Access Partnership

[www.pharmacyaccess.learnsomething.com](http://www.pharmacyaccess.learnsomething.com)

American Pharmaceutical Association

[www.pharmacist.com/pdf/emer\\_contra.pdf](http://www.pharmacist.com/pdf/emer_contra.pdf)



Family Planning Advocates of New York State

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