



# Say What?

## How to Talk to Your Pharmacist About Sexual Health

### *What does a pharmacy have for me?*

The pharmacy or drug store sells lots of things, including “over the counter” medication (no prescription required) and also medications by prescription. Pharmacies also have sexual and reproductive health supplies like condoms, lubricants, pregnancy tests and birth control.

### *What can a pharmacist tell me about sexual health, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy?*

Some pharmacists have completed special training on sexual health, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy and can provide information about birth control methods and how to avoid STIs. They are available to answer your questions and if they don't have all the information readily available, they can direct you to a local health clinic.

### *How do I find out if my local pharmacy offers Plan B, also known as emergency contraception (EC) or the “morning-after” pill?*

Emergency contraception (EC) (also known as Plan B or the morning-after pill) is a form of birth control that can prevent pregnancy up to 5 days after unprotected sex. EC is NOT the same as the abortion pill and will not cause an abortion.

In California, specially trained pharmacists can provide EC to women **of all ages** without requiring an advance prescription from a doctor or clinic.

Visit [www.EC-Help.org](http://www.EC-Help.org) to find a pharmacy with a specially trained pharmacist who can provide you with EC directly; call before you go to make sure the trained pharmacist is available.

### *What personal information do I have to give the pharmacist?*

The pharmacist will ask for your name and age. They will also ask if you have insurance for any related billing information. Any communication you have with the pharmacist is kept private by law. However, if you purchase any medications using your parents' insurance, your parents will have access to that information.

### *What rights do minors have in pharmacies?*

Minors, or people under 18, have the right to confidential and private health services in all health settings, including pharmacies. In California, minors have the right to get sexual and reproductive health information and services without their parents being notified.

### *Will everything I talk to the pharmacist about be private?*

Yes, everything will be private unless something is discussed that indicates a threat to your health or safety, such as violence or abuse.



## How to Talk to Your Pharmacist About Sexual Health, continued

### *How old do I have to be to go to a pharmacy?*

Anyone of any age can go to a pharmacy at any time, and you don't have to have an appointment. Ask your pharmacist about specific age requirements for picking up some prescription medications.

### *How can I find a pharmacy near me?*

There is often at least one pharmacy in every neighborhood. To find a local pharmacy you may search on the web using "pharmacy" and your city as the search terms.

### *What should I do if I want to talk to the pharmacist in private?*

When you approach the pharmacy counter, you can tell the pharmacist or pharmacy staff that you would like to have a private discussion. If the pharmacist doesn't suggest it, you can ask if there is a place where you can talk that is out of hearing distance of other customers.

### *I've heard there is an insurance program that pays for birth control – what is it?*

This insurance program is called Family Pact or FPACT. FPACT is a type of health insurance that minors can sign up for on their own through the health clinic. The FPACT insurance is completely private and confidential. It covers family planning products and services most of which require a prescription from your doctor or clinic. Once you sign up for FPACT, you will receive a teal-colored card to show you have FPACT insurance.

### *Can I use my teal card at the pharmacy? What can I use it for? What if I lose my teal card?*

If you have a current teal card/Family PACT card, you can use it at the pharmacy to cover any of your family planning purchases. This includes condoms, lubricants, pregnancy tests and hormonal birth control. If you lose your teal card, you need to go back to the clinic/doctor that gave it to you and request a replacement card.

### *Can I make an appointment to talk to a pharmacist so I don't have to wait in line?*

Pharmacists generally don't schedule appointments, but you may call in advance to set up a convenient time to meet with the pharmacist. If there is a particular pharmacist that you would like to speak with based on your personal preference – **male or female** – you should ask when you get to the pharmacy counter.

### *What if I need more time or information than the pharmacist has available? Where can I go?*

You may ask the pharmacist to provide you with referrals to local health services such as clinics or Planned Parenthoods that may be in your neighborhood. Some pharmacists have information already printed and available to provide you with additional community resources.

For more information, please contact Pharmacy Access Partnership  
(a center of the Pacific Institute for Women's Health): 510-272-0150 or  
[info@pharmacyaccess.org](mailto:info@pharmacyaccess.org) or visit [www.pharmacyaccess.org](http://www.pharmacyaccess.org).

