

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION 'POSTINOR-2 (LEVONORGESTREL)'

WHAT IS EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION?

Emergency contraception is an extremely effective and safe way of preventing an unplanned pregnancy. It is up to 95% effective if taken within 24 hours of unprotected sexual intercourse. It is still 85% effective if taken between 24-48 hours and 58% effective between 48-72 hours. Therefore emergency contraception should be taken **as soon as possible** after unprotected sexual intercourse. You may need to access this medication if you have had a condom break or slip, forgotten pills, used withdrawal (pulling out) or have had unprotected sex, and you wish to avoid an unintended pregnancy.

IMPORTANT: Emergency contraception **must be taken** within **120 hours** of having unprotected sexual intercourse

CONTRAINDICATIONS

Do not take Postinor-2 if you know you are pregnant, have abnormal vaginal bleeding, have breast cancer or know you are allergic to any of the ingredients of Postinor-2.

HOW DO I TAKE IT?

Take TWO Postinor-2 (750 mcg) tablets together as a single dose. Tablets can be swallowed whole with water, with or without food. Other brand names available are Levonelle-2, Norlevo and Postinor-1.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Postinor-2 works in three ways;

1. It can prevent or delay ovulation (the release of an egg from the woman's ovaries).
2. If ovulation has already taken place it may stop a fertilised egg from implanting (sticking) in the wall of the uterus (womb).
3. It makes the mucus at the entrance of the uterus thicker so sperm cannot get through.

IMPORTANT: You should keep using your regular contraception, e.g. the pill or condoms, for the rest of your cycle as you can ovulate **AFTER** taking the emergency contraception, and can still become pregnant.

SOME SIDE EFFECTS YOU MAY EXPERIENCE:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Breast tenderness
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding or 'spotting'
- Gastric upset/ nausea

A few women report light bleeding in the days after taking Postinor-2. This is NOT a normal period and is nothing to worry about.

(If you vomit within two hours of taking Postinor-2, you will need to repeat the treatment. If this clinic is closed, please refer to "How to access it" section)

WHEN TO EXPECT YOUR NEXT PERIOD?

Most women have a period within 3 weeks of taking Postinor-2. If your next period is late or is different than usual, it is important to have a pregnancy test, as you may be pregnant. Because you have had unprotected sex you could also consider a sexually transmitted infection check-up and also think about future contraception options.

CAN IT FAIL?

Postinor-2 has been shown to be up to 95% effective when used in the first 24 hours after unprotected sex. It is not known how effective Postinor-2 is when it is taken more than 72 hours after unprotected sexual intercourse. Some medications can greatly reduce the effectiveness of Postinor-2. They include some enzyme-inducing drugs e.g. anticonvulsants or rifampicin or St John's Wort. Warfarin levels may also be affected. Please advise the Nurse or Doctor if you are on these medications.

HOW TO ACCESS IT:

Postinor-2 is available over the counter at most local pharmacies and costs around \$25-\$35. No prescription is required. It is also available at Family Planning Clinics, hospital emergency departments and some doctors provide it directly.

For more information

Call Melbourne Sexual Health Centre on (03) 9341 6200 or Free call: 1800 032 017

Choose the 'Results and Information' option to speak with a Nurse if you have any further questions or concerns about Emergency Contraception.

This fact sheet is designed to provide you with information on Emergency Contraception. It is not intended to replace the need for a consultation with your doctor. All clients are strongly advised to check with their doctor about any specific questions or concerns they may have. Every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this pamphlet is correct at the time of printing.