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On Drugs and Therapeutics

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IN BRIEF

Plan B for 17-Year Olds

The FDA has announced that it will lower the age for over-the-counter access to the emergency contraceptive *Plan B*¹ from 18 to 17 years old. In a randomized, controlled trial, the two 0.75-mg levonorgestrel tablets in *Plan B*, taken 12 hours apart beginning within 72 hours after unprotected intercourse, decreased the overall pregnancy rate to 1.1% (11/976) of women who requested emergency contraception.² The sooner the drug is taken after coitus, the more effective it is. Nausea and vomiting can occur with *Plan B*. Fetal malformations have not been associated with pregnancies that occurred despite use of levonorgestrel-only emergency contraception.³

1. Emergency contraception OTC. *Med Lett Drugs Ther* 2004; 46:10.
2. Task Force on Postovulatory Methods of Fertility Regulation. Randomised controlled trial of levonorgestrel versus the Yuzpe regimen of combined oral contraceptives for emergency contraception. *Lancet* 1998; 352:428.
3. L Zhang et al. Pregnancy outcome after levonorgestrel-only emergency contraception failure: a prospective cohort study. *Hum Reprod* 2009 Mar 31 (epub).

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