

Levonorgestrel emergency contraception: important information for women taking other medicines

Some medicines, or herbal remedies that contain the ingredient St John's wort, might reduce how well levonorgestrel emergency contraception works.

What you need to do

Tell the doctor, pharmacist, or nurse if you are currently taking a medicine to treat any of the following, or you have used one in the past 4 weeks:

- epilepsy (eg, medicines called barbiturates, primidone, phenytoin, or carbamazepine)
- tuberculosis (eg, rifampicin, rifabutin)
- HIV (eg, ritonavir, efavirenz)
- a fungal infection (eg, griseofulvin)
- or if you have taken any herbal remedies that contain the ingredient St John's wort (scientific name *Hypericum perforatum*)

If you are taking any medicines or herbal remedies and are not sure if they might affect levonorgestrel emergency contraception check with your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.

What happens now?

Your doctor, pharmacist or nurse will talk to you about whether this applies to medicines you have recently taken. If it does, you should either:

- see a doctor or nurse to have another type of emergency contraception called a copper intrauterine device or 'coil' inserted into the womb (this does not interfere with the action of other medicines);

or:

- take a double dose of levonorgestrel emergency contraception. The pharmacist will give you 2 packs, which should be taken together at the same time

Further information about levonorgestrel emergency contraception

Levonorgestrel is a hormonal type of emergency contraception. It can be used within 3 days (72 hours) after unprotected sex or failure of a usual contraceptive method.

Levonorgestrel emergency contraception may not prevent pregnancy every time. It works best the sooner it is taken—preferably within 12 hours.

Advice for women taking levonorgestrel emergency contraception:

- see your doctor or nurse for advice on effective ongoing contraception
- do a pregnancy test to ensure that you are not pregnant if your period does not come at the right time or if you suspect you could be pregnant
- if the test is positive and you are pregnant (even after taking levonorgestrel), see a doctor or nurse as soon as possible to ensure that you receive the best care
- read the leaflet that comes with levonorgestrel, which provides further information about this emergency contraception including any potential side effects
- if you think that you may have had a side effect after taking levonorgestrel, remember you can report it on a [Yellow Card](https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/) (<https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>)