

The Eye on Abortion

August 2007



TO BE A PRO-LIFE PHARMACIST- THE “PLAN B” DILEMMA

Dear Pro-life Friends,

Pharmacists have a very perplexing job in today’s society. They are performing a necessary duty to mankind – distributing medications to help people through their various illnesses. But what about when they are called upon to dole out prescriptions that could actually *take the life* of another human? Should they fill that prescription? Would you?

Since Plan B, also known as the “morning-after-pill” or “emergency contraception (EC),” was made available over the counter a year ago this month, this moral dilemma has arisen more and more for pharmacists, and pharmacy owners, everywhere.

Women can purchase the product on the spot; however, those 17 and younger still require a prescription to obtain Plan B. Men can also purchase the product, assuming they are old enough, for their girlfriends, wives or others. So what is all the fuss about?

HOW DOES PLAN B WORK?

Plan B is a very high dose of the hormone levonorgestrel. **It is essentially a much more potent version of the daily birth control pill.** Plan B “needs” to be taken within five days (or 120 hours) of unprotected sex, to prevent (or eliminate) a pregnancy. It is effective up to 89 percent of the time when taken within 72 hours.

The overall claim from proponents of Plan B is that it *does not cause abortions*, but merely *prevents* pregnancies. Their claim is based on the way they define pregnancy. They say pregnancy begins at the time of implantation, whereas others believe that pregnancy begins at the point of conception, the moment when the new life *actually begins*. The latter definition is more scientifically accurate, to be sure. Professor John Dwyer, pre-eminent Australian AIDS expert and researcher, described the moment that the sperm enters the ovum as the creation of a “new and unique individual.”



So why has pregnancy been redefined to mean implantation, instead of 7-8 days before that at fertilization? Methods of birth control that prevent the sperm and egg from joining are less controversial, so it seems clear that there is an effort to make the general public believe that Plan B is this same type of contraception, which is not the case.

Plan B *can* prevent conception, by suppressing ovulation and by thickening the cervical mucus so that the sperm cannot meet the egg if it is released. But it can also **prevent implantation**, causing the death of the newly conceived embryo.

Physicians for Life, a national group of pro-life physicians dedicated to protecting life, explain this on their website:

To stop conception occurring, that is, to stop sperm and ovum joining, is *contraception*. Condoms, diaphragms, spermicides, vasectomy and tubal ligation are accurately described as methods of contraception. Obviously any drug or device used *after* conception has occurred cannot be termed a contraceptive.

The correct term to describe any interference with the pregnancy after conception has occurred is '*abortifacient*'. This is the precise biological description for any drug or device that acts to end a pregnancy once it has begun at conception...Redefine when a pregnancy and a new human life begins, and you redefine the key characteristic of the drug – how it works!

Numerous studies support the notion that the high dose, high powered steroid(s) found in Emergency Abortion drugs like Plan B are abortifacient 75-89% of the time. Rarely will a drug like Plan B work to suppress ovulation and truly prevent the meeting of the male and female gametes PRIOR to the moment of conception.

If you don't believe them, just **look at the instructions inside of Plan B (or call a pharmacist and ask them to look) or check out Plan B's website-www.go2planb.com, under "How Plan B Works."** They clearly state that one of the ways it works is to prevent the implantation of an embryo.

THE PHARMACIST'S DILEMMA

While the FDA regulates pharmaceuticals, each state has to determine its own laws concerning doctors, pharmacists and pharmacies. For example, certain states have enacted laws giving pharmacists the right to opt out of filling prescriptions. Other laws have been passed forcing pharmacies that carry some forms of contraceptives to dispense *all* contraceptive methods (including Plan B).

To show you how this plays out, let's take a look at the current law in Washington concerning Plan B. Washington's Board of Pharmacy ruled in April of this year to pass a "must-fill" policy requiring pharmacies to fill all lawful prescriptions. This law also contains a provision allowing pharmacists who have personal objections to get a co-worker to fill the order. That would only apply, however, if the patient could get the prescription during the same pharmacy visit.

This new law places pro-life pharmacy owners and pharmacists between a rock and a hard place. **Pharmacy owners** have no way of washing their hands of selling Plan B because as a pharmacy, they are required to fill all Plan B prescriptions that are brought in, which means ordering the product, against their will, and selling it at their pharmacy.

Pharmacists in Washington have to fill the prescription for Plan B, if no other pharmacist is available to do it at the time, against their will as well. If a pharmacy owner or pharmacist considers refusing to comply with this new law, he must also consider that if he does, he faces discipline from the board, which has the power to revoke state licenses.



This has pushed some beyond what they can bear...and they are not standing for it. On July 27, 2007, a pharmacy owner and two pharmacists filed a lawsuit in federal court saying the law violates their civil rights by forcing them into choosing between "their livelihoods and their deeply held religious and moral beliefs." The plaintiffs are pharmacists Rhonda Mesler and Margo Thelen, and Stormans Inc., the owners of Ralph's Thriftway in Olympia, Washington. Please pray for them in their battle as they stand to protect life.

So that is the law in Washington right now, but what about other states?

The laws vary from state to state, and many states have not yet set up specific laws concerning the handling of Plan B by pharmacies and pharmacists.

For example, 13 states allow some health care providers to refuse to provide services related to contraception, (however, Illinois has regulations requiring pharmacies that stock contraceptives to dispense all contraceptive methods), and many other states do not have specific laws set up concerning Plan B (including the state I now live in, Missouri).

To view complete charts listing current state laws concerning EC visit the Alan Guttmacher Institute website at www.guttmacher.org. Look under "Contraception," then under "State Policies in Brief."

As I mentioned earlier, the reason many individuals are uncomfortable dispensing Plan B is because of its potential to prevent a newly conceived embryo from implanting into the uterus. That is what the controversy is all about.

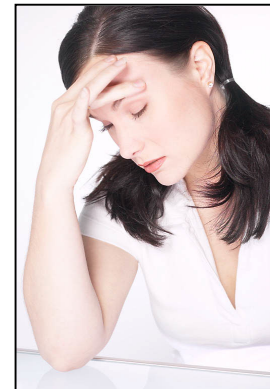
However, Planned Parenthood claims just the opposite. They state that Plan B almost always works to prevent conception. Even if that were true, it's the word *almost* that is bothersome. They give no evidence to back up their claim. Instead, they offer a lot of bad advice for women and girls concerning Plan B, and other makeshift methods for preventing pregnancy/killing your unborn child.

PP SHAMELESSLY PUSHES EC

Planned Parenthood (PP) has always been fixated on death...and money. They want your business, no matter what it takes.

On their website, they encourage women to stock up on Plan B before they need it, just so they will have it in case they ever need it.

Then they make sure you know that they sell Plan B at their clinics. This is just one more method of drawing in more business. Yes, they make a few dollars on the sale of Plan B, but PP knows that if they can get a woman to come to their clinics for so called "contraception," then that same woman will most likely revisit the PP clinic if she faces an unplanned pregnancy in the future. This means PP also stands to profit from potential future abortions.



Am I being unfair to PP? The statement below comes from PP's website. Notice how they refer to the "need for abortion" at the end.

EC should be in every woman's medicine cabinet. It is an important tool for women to prevent unintended pregnancy and the need for abortion.

PP also points out that they sell EC for less than most other distributors, to provide that extra motivation for women to make the trip to PP rather than somewhere else.

I was shocked to see that on PP's website they also proceeded to give **unauthorized medical advice** as to how women can combine their daily birth control pills to make them equal to (or close to) the strength of Plan B, or EC!

PP even states the following on their website:

Plan B® is a brand of hormone pills approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) specifically for emergency contraception. Certain birth control pills may also be prescribed for use as emergency contraception.

They say certain birth control pills can be *prescribed* for use as EC, but PP certainly does not serve as the readers' personal physicians! Regardless, they go on to give their "medical advice:"

How to Take (From PP website)

Plan B and other progestin-only pills can be taken in one dose or in two doses, 12 hours apart. Combination hormone pills must be taken in two doses, 12 hours apart. The number of pills in a dose varies with the brand of the pill. Use the same brand for both doses.

Swallow the pills in the first dose as soon as possible, up to 120 hours — five days — after having unprotected sex. **EC may cause nausea and vomiting.** (Emphasis added) This risk is much higher for combination pills than for progestin-only pills. To reduce the risk of nausea, you may want to take an anti-nausea medication, such as Dramamine® or Bonine®, one hour before taking EC.

If you are taking the pills in two doses, swallow the second dose 12 hours after taking the first dose. **If you threw up after the first dose, be sure to use an anti-nausea medication one hour before taking the second dose. Or you may want to take the second dose as a vaginal suppository by inserting the pills with your fingers as high into the vagina as you can reach.** (The medication will be absorbed through the vaginal tissue.) (Emphasis added)

If you vomit the second dose, do not take any extra pills. They probably won't reduce the risk of pregnancy. But they will probably make you sick to your stomach.

The following table also appears on the same page on PP's website:

Pill Brand	Manufacturer	1st Dose	2nd Dose (12 hrs later)
Progestin-only Pills			
Plan B®	Barr	1 white pill or 2 white pills in one dose	1 white pill
Ovrette®	Wyeth-Ayerst	20 yellow pills or 40 yellow pills in one dose	20 yellow pills
Combination Hormone Pills			
Allesse®	Wyeth-Ayerst	5 pink pills	5 pink pills
Aviane®	Duramed	5 orange pills	5 orange pills
Cryselle®	Barr	4 white pills	4 white pills
Enpresse®	Barr	4 orange pills	4 orange pills
Jolessa™	Barr	4 pink pills	4 pink pills
Lessina®	Barr	5 pink pills	5 pink pills
Levlen®	Berlex	4 light orange pills	4 light orange pills
Levlite®	Berlex	5 pink pills	5 pink pills
Levora®	Watson	4 white pills	4 white pills
Lo/Ovral®	Wyeth-Ayerst	4 white pills	4 white pills
LowOgestrel®	Watson	4 white pills	4 white pills
Lutera™	Watson	5 white pills	5 white pills
Nordette®	Wyeth-Ayerst	4 light orange pills	4 light orange pills
Ogestrel®	Watson	2 white pills	2 white pills
Ovral®	Wyeth-Ayerst	2 white pills	2 white pills
Portia®	Barr	4 pink pills	4 pink pills
Quasense™	Watson	4 white pills	4 white pills
Seasonale®	Barr	4 pink pills	4 pink pills
Seasonique®	Barr	4 light blue-green pills	4 light blue-green pills
Tri-Levlen®	Berlex	4 yellow pills	4 yellow pills
Triphasil®	Wyeth-Ayerst	4 yellow pills	4 yellow pills
Trivora®	Watson	4 pink pills	4 pink pills

Although PP claims using EC is very safe for women, they have created their own "Plan B" in case one of their viewers follows their instructions and becomes ill. At the top of this same web page, you will find a link to a **legal disclaimer**. Here is an excerpt from that disclaimer:

PPFA ASSUMES NO LIABILITY FOR ANY DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT, DECISION MADE, OR ACTION TAKEN IN RELIANCE UPON INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE PPFA WEB SITE OR ANY OTHER INTERNET SITES LINKED TO IT IN ANY WAY. PPFA DOES NOT ASSUME ANY RESPONSIBILITY OR RISK FOR YOUR USE OF THE PPFA WEB SITE OR THE INTERNET.

The (hidden) message clearly is **"use PP's website at your own risk!"** What happened to women's health being their number one concern?

Pushing EC onto adult women isn't enough for PP. They promote EC, and visits to their clinics, over and over on their teen website, Teenwire, as well.

BAD ADVICE FOR TEENS

PP has always promoted premarital sex, after all it generates more business for them. According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, 67 percent of all abortion clients have never been married. This means teens are a prime target.

Teenwire's article "*Why Teens Need Emergency Contraception*," begins like this:

You had sex and the condom broke. Your older sister had too much to drink and forgot to use protection. Your best friend was raped. All three of you would probably think the same thing: "What if I get pregnant?"

It can be really scary to think you might be pregnant when you don't want to be. Fortunately, there's an option in emergency situations like this that can actually prevent pregnancy before it happens — emergency contraception (EC). **"Accidents and mistakes happen to people every day,"** explains Brita, 17. "And that's why EC is available — to try to **fix the accident or mistake** before it is life-altering."

Not only is PP promoting EC, but as usual, they are promoting premarital sex. There is no guidance whatsoever encouraging teens to avoid repeating these same "mistakes." PP only pushes the quick fix and encourages teens to use EC following future "mistakes." PP consistently frames unplanned pregnancies following premarital sex as something that just "happens" to girls, that they somehow could not have stopped the pregnancy from happening in the first place, and then PP is there with arms wide open to offer them a "solution."



PP also encourages teens to visit their clinics to get EC:

Every woman *at risk* (emphasis added) of unintended pregnancy should know about emergency contraception and have it in her medicine cabinet. For more information on emergency contraception, call 1-800-230-PLAN for the nearest Planned Parenthood health center.

Remember, after they get teens in the door once, more visits are sure to follow.

In the following Q and A, Teenwire (PP) also falsely assures one teen that EC does not cause abortions.

Dear Experts:

Ok this is like three questions in one: is the morning after pill considered abortion? how can you get the morning after pill? how effective is the pill?

Casperx2

Dear Casperx2,

...EC does not cause an abortion (Emphasis added); instead, EC helps *prevent* pregnancy...EC prevents the egg from joining with the sperm. It can also prevent ovulation — the release of an egg. ***Theoretically, EC could also prevent implantation, but that has not been proven scientifically.*** (Emphasis added-Remember the Plan B instructions?)

Pregnancy begins when a fertilized egg implants itself in the lining of the uterus. EC prevents a pregnancy before it occurs, and will not harm an already existing pregnancy.

Plan B, a brand of EC, is available over the counter at many pharmacies for women over 18. Teens under 18 can still access EC with a prescription. EC is available at Planned Parenthood health centers, as well as college, public, and women's health centers. To make an appointment call 1-800-230-PLAN for a Planned Parenthood center nearest you.

Many Planned Parenthood health centers have weekend and evening hours to help women get the services they need, when they need them — fast. However, the best way young women can protect themselves is to get EC before an accident happens, and keep it on hand in case they need it. That way, they won't waste time after unprotected intercourse waiting to get an appointment with a health care provider and trying to get a prescription filled.

teenwire.com® Editors

As I mentioned earlier, you can probably see now how convenient it is for people like PP to redefine pregnancy as beginning at implantation versus at conception. It helps them alleviate the fears of potential consumers of products like EC so they will make purchases based on false "facts." This is dishonest and unfair to women and girls who may have made another choice, a better choice, had they had the real facts to begin with.

Please continue to pray for and support the work of SET as we make the truth about EC and abortion clear. May the Lord lead women and girls everywhere to choose life when faced with an unplanned pregnancy.

For the unborn,

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