

Confusion about emergency contraception access common

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(HealthDay) -- While most pharmacies report having emergency contraception (EC) in stock, misinformation regarding what age women can take it without a prescription is common, according to a study published online March 26 in *Pediatrics*.

Tracey A. Wilkinson, M.D., M.P.H., of the Boston University School of Medicine, and colleagues utilized female callers posing as 17-year-old adolescents, or as physicians calling on behalf of 17-year-old patients, to call 943 pharmacies in five U.S. cities.

The researchers found that 759 pharmacies (80 percent) told adolescent callers, and 766 (81 percent) told physician callers, that EC was available on the day of the call. However, more pharmacies (19 percent)

incorrectly told the adolescent callers that it would be impossible for them to obtain EC under any circumstances, compared with 3 percent of pharmacies making that claim to physician callers. Pharmacies conveyed the correct age for which they were allowed to dispense EC without a prescription in 431 adolescent calls (57 percent) and 466 physician calls (61 percent). Compared with physician callers, adolescent callers were put on hold more frequently (54 versus 26 percent) and spoke to self-identified pharmacists significantly less often (3 versus 12 percent).

"Most pharmacies report having EC in stock. However, [misinformation](#) regarding who can take EC, and at what age it is available without a prescription, is common," the authors write.

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