

AAP: Emergency contraception should be given to sexually active teens

November 19 2019



(HealthDay)—Pediatricians should provide emergency contraception

(EC) to teenagers who have had unprotected or underprotected intercourse, according to a policy statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics published online Nov. 18 in *Pediatrics*.

Krishna K. Upadhyia, M.D., M.P.H., from the Children's National Health System in Washington, D.C., discusses available EC methods and provides data on the safety, efficacy, and use of EC in teenagers.

Upadhyia recommends that pediatricians be aware of the prevalence of sexual behavior among teenagers. The pregnancy prevention methods most commonly used by U.S. teenagers are condoms and withdrawal, despite the availability of hormonal and long-acting contraceptives. EC is an important backup method, and all teenagers should have access to EC. Indications for EC use include unprotected or underprotected intercourse. For adolescents and [young adults](#) in need of immediate EC, pediatricians should provide [emergency contraceptive pills](#) (ECPs) or copper intrauterine devices. In addition, pediatricians should provide a prescription for and/or a supply of ECPs for future use. ECPs can safely be prescribed over the phone. ECPs are most effective when used as soon as possible but may be used up to 120 hours after unprotected or underprotected intercourse. As part of routine anticipatory guidance in the context of discussions on [sexual health](#), all adolescents should receive counseling about EC.

"Medical discourse indicates that personal values of physicians and pharmacists continue to affect access to EC, particularly for adolescents," Upadhyia writes.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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Citation: AAP: Emergency contraception should be given to sexually active teens (2019, November 19) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-11-aap-emergency-contraception-sexually-teens.html>

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