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## Where can you get the morning after pill? <sup>[1]</sup>

Alice,

Where can you purchase the morning after pill?

### **Answer**

Dear Reader,

Good news! In the United States, several one-pill formulations of emergency contraception (EC; also called the "morning after pill"), including brand name and generic versions, are available on the shelf in the family planning aisle at many pharmacies and drugstores. This EC is available without a prescription and has no sales restrictions based on age or gender. This means that anyone can buy it without having to show an ID as proof-of-age. It's a good idea to call the pharmacy or drugstore first to see which types of EC are available.

The "morning after pill" is a bit of a misnomer — you can take it immediately following sex that occurs when a birth control method failed or was not used. The general recommendation is to take these EC methods within 72 hours after sex; however, it may still be effective if taken up to 120 hours afterwards. Bottom line: it's more effective the sooner it's taken. You may also want to get a package to have on hand — that way; you can take EC as soon as possible if you need it. The price of EC varies by region and pharmacy.

There are a few other types of EC that require either a prescription or a visit to a health care provider. Both options, a prescription pill formulation (called Ella) and the copper intrauterine device (IUD) can be effective if used within 120 hours or five days after sex. If you'd like to learn more about those options, check out the [Emergency Contraception](#) <sup>[2]</sup> category in the *Go Ask Alice!* archives.

No matter what option you choose, if you have health insurance, you may be able to get EC at a low cost or no out-of-pocket cost under certain circumstances. Additionally, some cities make EC available for free, 24 hours a day at public hospitals — check to see if this is the case where you live. Lastly, reproductive health clinics, such as [Planned Parenthood](#) <sup>[3]</sup>, also provide emergency contraception and may have a sliding scale fee.

Hope this helps!

Alice!

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