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Emergency hormonal contraception and breastfeeding

“The morning after pill”

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It is possible to continue uninterrupted breastfeeding and take the “morning after pill”.

Levonelle is licensed to be given to women during breastfeeding. The patient information leaflet in the packet assures women that it is safe with continued breastfeeding. It contains a progesterone-only drug levonorgestrel.

The tablet should be taken as soon as possible after unprotected intercourse – up to 72 hours after. The longer the interval between intercourse and taking the tablet the greater is the chance that it will not be effective. No contraception has a 100% success rate. If vomiting occurs soon after taking the tablet medical advice should be sought as soon as possible.

The next period may be early or late and barrier contraception should be continued until the next period. Levonelle can be purchased over the counter from a pharmacist as well as being prescribed by a GP, family planning clinic or accident and emergency department.

Should the next period be delayed more than 5 days she should seek further medical advice. Levonelle is reported by the manufacturers not to show evidence of teratogenicity even if it fails to prevent pregnancy. However emergency hormonal contraception should not be used if there is any possibility that the woman is already pregnant.

Women who do not wish to expose their baby to any medication may wish to consider how frequently they are breastfeeding and therefore the likelihood of ovulation. She needs to take into account whether she is still exclusively breastfeeding or has introduced solids or complimentary feeds which make it more likely that she is ovulating. She and her partner also need to consider the consequences of a subsequent pregnancy for them.

A copper intra-uterine contraceptive can be inserted up to 5 days after intercourse as an alternative method of emergency contraception.

To find your nearest Breastfeeding Supporter call the Supporterline 0300 100 0210

Calls to 0300 numbers cost no more than calls to UK numbers starting 01 and 02 and will be part of any inclusive minutes that apply to your provider and call package

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