

Teen use of morning after pill on the rise

By ACSH Staff — July 22, 2015



Emergency contraceptives, like Plan B One-Step, are taken

to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex. Because they are most often taken the morning after intercourse, they are commonly known as the morning after pill. It's a bit of a misnomer: if taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex, emergency contraceptives can decrease the chance of getting pregnant by 89 percent, although they are most effective if taken within 24 hours.

According to [new findings from](#) ^[1] the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 22 percent of sexually active teen girls aged 15 to 19 have used the morning-after pill between 2011-2013. This is up from 8 percent in 2002. The report is based on interviews with about 2000 people.

However, teens aren't actually having more sex. The report also states: In 2011-2013, 44% of female teenagers and 47% of male teenagers aged 15-19 had experienced sexual intercourse; the percentage has declined significantly, by 14% for female and 22% for male teenagers, over the past 25 years.

[Dr. Metee Comkornreucha](#) ^[2], an adolescent medicine specialist at Nicklaus Children's Hospital in Miami, who was not involved in the study, said this increase in emergency contraception use was likely due mainly to an increase in awareness and education about this form of contraception.

There are both positive and negative implications to the rising teen use of the morning after pill. While it's good that more teens are taking steps to prevent unwanted pregnancy, the fact that one out of five sexually active teen girls bought the morning after pill, is a sign that teens, like adults, often are not very good at contraception, [according to Bill Albert](#) ^[3], chief program officer for the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

Emergency contraceptives should not be used as regular birth control because they aren't as effective. Teens engaging in sexual activity should practice safe sex and use birth control methods such as condoms, birth control pills, or IUDs to prevent pregnancy.

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2015/07/22/teen-use-of-morning-after-pill-on-the-rise>

Links

[1] <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db209.htm>

[2] <http://www.livescience.com/51622-teens-emergency-contraception-increase.html>

[3] <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/07/22/teen-morning-after-pill/30501563/>