

encourage risk-taking behaviour and sexual promiscuity. In this way it also exacerbates the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, as it offers no protection against these.

Promotion of the morning-after pill is entirely unethical.

SPUC Membership Form

I wish to join SPUC

I wish to renew membership

£100 Life membership

£10 Annual ordinary membership

£2 Student

£2 Unwaged, OAPs, single parent

I enclose my subscription of £ _____

Cheques made payable to SPUC

Mr/Mrs/Miss _____ BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone (inc. code) _____

E-mail _____

Return to:
SPUC, 5-6 St Matthew Street, London SW1P 2JT
Tel: 020 7222 5845

YNK03D



Society for the Protection of Unborn Children
5/6 St Matthew Street
London SW1P 2JT
Tel: 020 7222 5845
www.spuc.org.uk

The Morning-After Pill

What you need to know



Society for the Protection of Unborn Children
5/6 St Matthew Street
London SW1P 2JT
Tel: 020 7222 5845
www.spuc.org.uk

What is the morning-after pill?

The morning-after pill is intended for use up to 72 hours after sex which may lead to pregnancy. The morning-after pill most commonly used in Britain is called Levonelle-2.

How does it work?

The morning-after pill can act as a contraceptive by stopping ovulation and therefore preventing fertilisation. It may also alter the motility of sperm in the fallopian tube and prevent it from meeting the egg.

The morning-after pill can also act as an early abortifacient. It attacks the womb's lining, so that if fertilisation has already taken place the newly-created embryo is unable to implant.

How can a woman tell which effect the drug has had?

She cannot tell. One of the difficulties a woman faces after taking the morning-after pill is that she will probably never know whether it caused

an abortion or not. Pregnancy tests cannot detect the embryo until after implantation. If conception occurs followed by an early abortion, the embryo will not be identifiable in the menstrual loss.

What is contained in the morning-after pill?

The morning-after pill is a progestogen-only pill that contains up to 50 times the daily dosage of progestogen found in the ordinary mini-pill. Progestogen is a synthetic copy of the natural female hormone progesterone.

The morning-after pill: Ethical or not?

Describing the morning-after pill as “emergency contraception” is misleading. Sometimes the morning-after pill will work as an abortifacient.

Where fertilisation has already occurred the morning-after pill will typically result in the loss of human life, as the newly created embryo cannot survive when he/she is prevented from implanting in the womb.

If the morning-after pill fails to prevent pregnancy or cause an early abortion, there is a risk of an ectopic pregnancy developing (where the embryo implants outside the womb). Where there is an ongoing pregnancy, 1 in 20 cases will be ectopic. This is a life-threatening condition. Where there is no ectopic pregnancy and the embryo continues to develop there is a risk of disabling conditions arising.

There have been no trials on the long-term effects of the morning-after pill and no published trials on its effects on the fertility and health of teenage girls. The morning-after pill is being increasingly promoted, particularly to girls under the age of consent. The effects on women's health are not being monitored, despite the fact that the drug company behind it recommends that the morning-after pill is not given to girls under 16 without the supervision of their doctor.

In spite of the huge increase in the provision of the morning-after pill since the early 1990s, there has been no comparable decrease in the number of registered abortions or teenage pregnancies, despite the early abortions it causes. Its promotion is more likely to