PIPADOR REVISION

# MRCOG Part 1 Revision Notes

## *Emergency Contraception*

CLINICAL MANAGEMENT • LECTURE 490

VISUAL EXAMINATION REVISION NOTES

*2026 Edition*

490

MRCOG PART 1 REVISION NOTES | CLINICAL MANAGEMENT

# Emergency Contraception

*Definitions, methods, assessment, choice and follow-up of emergency contraception (FSRH)*

| Cu-IUD | UPA 30 mg | LNG 1.5 mg | 3 weeks |
|---|---|---|---|
| Most effective EC (< 0.1%) | Up to 120 h | Up to 72 h | Pregnancy test after oral EC |

**■ KEY FACTS: Learning objectives**

- Define emergency contraception (EC) and unprotected sexual intercourse (UPSI).
- Describe the methods, mechanisms, timing and effectiveness of EC (FSRH Emergency Contraception guideline).
- Describe assessment, choosing a method, drug interactions, quick-starting contraception and safeguarding.

## 490.1 Key definitions

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| **Emergency contraception (EC)** | Methods used after UPSI (or contraceptive failure) to reduce the risk of pregnancy |
| **UPSI** | Unprotected sexual intercourse — including condom failure, missed pills/late injection, or enzyme-inducer interaction |
| **Earliest expected ovulation** | Calculated from the shortest likely cycle (day 14 of a 28-day cycle minus variation) — sets the time limit for Cu-IUD after multiple UPSI episodes |
| **Quick starting** | Starting ongoing hormonal contraception immediately after EC (rather than waiting for next period) |
| **Fraser guidelines** | Criteria for providing contraception to under-16s without parental consent |

**■ IN PLAIN ENGLISH: Emergency contraception**

Emergency contraception works mainly by **stopping or delaying ovulation** (pills) or **preventing fertilisation/implantation** (copper IUD). It does **not** cause abortion. The copper IUD is the most effective and should be offered to everyone who is eligible.

## 490.2 Methods

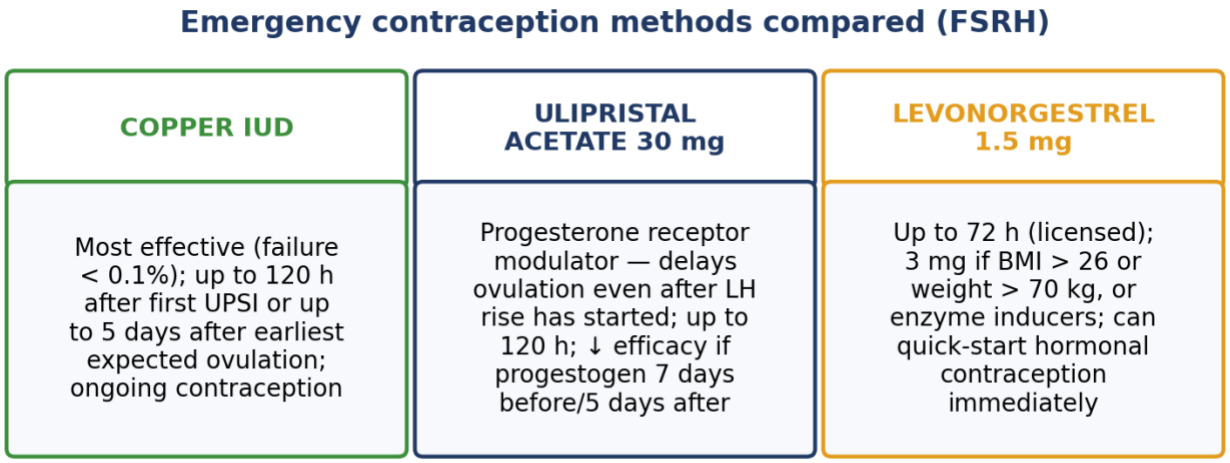



*Figure 490.1 — Emergency contraception methods compared*

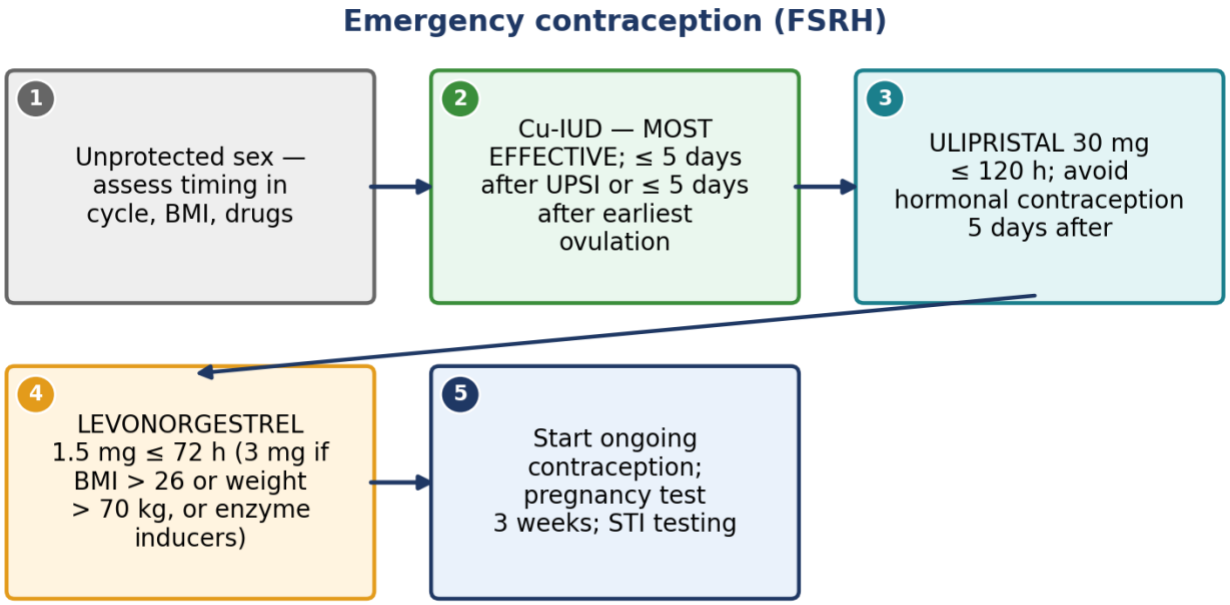



*Figure 490.2 — EC decision pathway*

## 490.3 Assessment and choice

| Step | Details (FSRH) |
|---|---|
| **History** | • Date of LMP and cycle length<br>• Timing of all UPSI episodes this cycle<br>• Current contraception<br>• Medication (enzyme inducers), BMI/weight, breastfeeding<br>• Previous EC this cycle, STI risk, safeguarding |
| **Offer Cu-IUD to all eligible** | • Within 5 days of first UPSI or within 5 days of earliest expected ovulation<br>• Give oral EC at the same visit in case the IUD cannot be fitted |
| **UPA vs LNG** | • UPA more effective than LNG (especially near ovulation)<br>• LNG preferred if progestogen taken in previous 7 days or quick start of hormonal contraception needed immediately |

| Step | Details (FSRH) |
|---|---|
| **Repeat use** | • Can repeat the same oral EC more than once in a cycle<br>• Avoid LNG within 5 days after UPA |
| **Breastfeeding** | LNG compatible; after UPA express and discard milk for 1 week |
| **Vomiting** | Repeat dose if vomiting within 3 hours |

## 490.4 After emergency contraception

- **Ongoing contraception**: after LNG — quick start hormonal contraception immediately (condoms/abstain 7 days, 2 days for POP)
  - After UPA — wait **5 days** before starting hormonal contraception (use condoms meanwhile).
- **Pregnancy test** 3 weeks after the last UPSI (or if the next period is late/abnormal).
- STI testing (chlamydia/gonorrhoea NAAT ≥ 2 weeks after exposure; HIV/syphilis), PEPSE if indicated.
- Safeguarding: under 16s (Fraser), under 13s (always safeguarding referral), coercion, sexual assault (refer to SARC).

**■ COMMON PITFALLS**

Not offering the Cu-IUD.

Forgetting double-dose LNG for BMI > 26 / weight > 70 kg or enzyme inducers.

Starting hormonal contraception immediately after UPA (reduces its effect).

Telling women EC causes abortion.

## 490.5 Must-know summary

**■ EXAM TIP**

- Cu-IUD: most effective; ≤ 5 days after first UPSI or ≤ 5 days after earliest ovulation; offer to all.
- UPA 30 mg ≤ 120 h (wait 5 days before hormonal contraception); LNG 1.5 mg ≤ 72 h (3 mg if BMI > 26/> 70 kg/enzyme inducers).
- Pregnancy test at 3 weeks; STI testing; quick-start contraception.
- Safeguarding for young people and assault.

**■ MNEMONIC / MEMORY AID**

**EC windows — 'Copper 5 days, UPA 5 days (120 h), LNG 3 days (72 h)'**.