

## Emergency Contraception in National Essential Medicines Lists

Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECPs) are an essential component of women's reproductive health. They offer women an important second chance to prevent pregnancy when a regular method fails, no method was used, or sex was forced. Research over the past 30 years has shown that ECPs are safe and effective.

The most recent (April 2015) World Health Organization's Essential Medicines List (EML) includes one form of ECP, containing levonorgestrel (LNG) as an active ingredient. While other drugs can be used for EC, only the LNG form is listed by the WHO at this time. The WHO list includes two regimen options for LNG ECPs: two tablets of 0.75 milligrams, or one tablet of 1.5 milligrams (mg). (These may also be written as 750 micrograms and 1500 micrograms ( $\mu\text{g}$ .) Either regimen can be used; although the two-pill regimen is labeled for the pills to be taken 12 hours apart, the current recommendation is for both pills to be taken together as a single 1.5 mg dose.

A new drug used for emergency contraception, called ulipristal acetate (UPA), is included in one country's EML but is not included in the WHO EML at this time.

A number of countries have shared their national EMLs on the WHO website<sup>1</sup>; others have been shared via personal correspondence. Those that include ECPs are listed below, with the year of publication; two countries specify a different method of EC, based on taking a higher dose of regular oral contraceptives (called the "Yuzpe" regimen). The countries whose EMLs are available but do not include EC are also listed. However, the fact that a country does not include EC in its EMLs does not mean there is no product registered or on the market. For those countries with no EC listed in its EML, we have listed whether or not EC is available locally.

### **Of the 118 countries with available EMLs, 62 countries are known to list ECPs:**

**6** include only the 1.5 mg dose

**38** include only the 0.75 mg dose

**12** include both the 1.5 and 0.75 mg doses **5** include LNG but do not specify the dose

**1** includes UPA EC

**2** include the Yuzpe regimen (high dose of regular oral contraceptives as EC)

### **56 countries do not include ECPs. Of these, 7 do not include any contraceptives**

#### **6 National EMLs are known to include only the 1.5 mg LNG ECP regimen:**

**Brazil:** 2010

**Ghana:** 2010

**Sweden:** 2011

**Cook Islands:** 2007

**Peru:** 2010

**Tunisia:** 2008

#### **38 National EMLs are known to include only the 0.75 mg LNG ECP regimen:**

**Algeria:** 2007

**Fiji:** 2006

**Mexico:** 2009

**Armenia:** 2010

**Gabon:** Year unknown

**Nauru:** 2010

**Bhutan:** 2012

**Georgia:** 2007

**Nicaragua:** 2009

**Bolivia:** 2011-2013

**Haiti:** 2012

**Niue:** 2006

**Burkina Faso:** 2014

**Iran:** 2009

**Paraguay:** 2009

**Cape Verde:** 2009

**Jamaica:** 2008

**Rwanda:** 2010

**Chile:** 2005

**Kenya:** 2010

**Senegal:** 2008

**Dem. Rep. of Congo:** 2010

**Kyrgyzstan:** 2009

**Seychelles:** 2010

**Dominican Republic:** 2005

**Malawi:** 2015

**Solomon Islands:** 2010

**Ethiopia:** 2015

**Mali:** 2008

**South Africa:** 2008

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. "National Medicines List/Formulary/Standard Treatment Guidelines." Web site: [www.who.int/selection\\_medicines/country\\_lists/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/selection_medicines/country_lists/en/index.html).

**Sri Lanka:** 2009  
**Sudan:** 2007  
**Suriname:** 2014

**Thailand:** 2008  
**Tuvalu:** 2008  
**Uganda:** 2012

**Zambia:** 2013  
**Zimbabwe:** 2011

**12 National EMLs are known to include both the 1.5 and 0.75 mg LNG ECP regimens:**

**Cameroon:** 2009  
**Colombia:** 2011  
**Congo:** 2013  
**Ecuador:** 2011  
**Laos:** Year unknown

**Moldova:** 2009  
**Myanmar:** 2010  
**Nepal:** 2009  
**Pakistan:** 2007  
**Russia:** Year unknown

**St. Vincent & the  
Grenadines:** 2010  
**Tajikistan:** 2009

**5 National EMLs are known to include LNG ECPs without specifying indication or dose:**

**Belize:** 2009-2011  
**Central African Rep.:** 2009

**China:** 2007  
**Syria:** 2008

**Ukraine:** 2009

**2 National EMLs are known to include the Yuzpe regimen (high dose of regular oral contraceptives as EC):**

**Tanzania:** 2013

**Zimbabwe:** 2011

**1 National EML is known to include UPA ECPs:**

**Sweden:** 2011

**56 National EMLs are known NOT to include ECPs:**

**Afghanistan:** 2007  
**Angola:** 2008 (*no contraceptives in EML; no EC product registered, but allows for import with license*)  
**Argentina:** 2005 (*EC product registered*)  
**Bahrain:** 2009  
**Bangladesh:** 2008 (*EC product registered*)  
**Barbados:** 2011-2012 (*EC product registered*)  
**Botswana:** 2012 (*EC product registered*)  
**Bulgaria:** 2009 (*EC product registered*)  
**Burundi:** 2012 (*no EC product registered, but allows for import with license*)  
**Cambodia:** 2003 (*EC product registered*)  
**Chad:** 2007 (*no EC product registered, but allows for import with license*)

**Cote d'Ivoire:** Year unknown (*EC product registered*)  
**Croatia:** 2010 (*EC product registered*)  
**Djibouti:** 2007 (*EC product registered*)  
**Egypt:** 2006 (*EC product registered*)  
**El Salvador:** 2009 (*EC product registered*)  
**Eritrea:** 2010  
**Guinea-Conakry:** 2013 (*EC product registered*)  
**Guyana:** 2009-2010  
**Honduras:** 2009-2011  
**India:** 2011 (*no contraceptives in EML, but EC product registered*)  
**Indonesia:** 2008 (*Listed as removed since 2005 edition (EC product registered)*)  
**Iraq:** 2010  
**Jordan:** 2009  
**Kiribati:** 2009

**Lesotho:** 2005 (*no contraceptives in EML, but EC product registered*)  
**Macedonia:** 2010 (*no contraceptives in EML, but EC product registered*)  
**Madagascar:** 2008 (*EC product registered*)  
**Malaysia:** 2008 (*EC product registered*)  
**Maldives:** 2009  
**Malta:** 2008  
**Marshall Islands:** 2007 (*no contraceptives in EML*)  
**Mauritania:** 2007 (*EC product registered*)  
**Montenegro:** 2011 (*EC product registered*)  
**Morocco:** 2008 (*no contraceptives in EML, but EC product registered*)  
**Namibia:** 2008 (*EC product registered*)  
**Nigeria:** 2010 (*EC product registered*)

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. "National Medicines List/Formulary/Standard Treatment Guidelines." Web site: [www.who.int/selection\\_medicines/country\\_lists/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/selection_medicines/country_lists/en/index.html).

**North Korea:** 1999, list for international agencies (*no contraceptives*)

**Oman:** 2009

**Palau:** 2006

**Papua New Guinea:** 2002

**Philippines:** 2008

**Poland:** 2009 (*EC product registered*)

**Serbia:** 2010 (*EC product registered*)

**Slovakia:** 2010 (*EC product registered*)

**Slovenia:** 2010 (*EC product registered*)

**Somalia:** 2006 (*no contraceptives in EML*)

**Timor Leste:** 2004

**Togo:** 2012 (*EC product registered*)

**Tonga:** 2007

**Trinidad and Tobago:** 2010 (*EC product registered*)

**Uruguay:** 2011 (*EC product registered*)

**Vanuatu:** 2007

**Venezuela:** 2004 (*EC product registered*)

**Vietnam:** 2008 (*EC product registered*)

**Yemen:** 2007 (*EC product registered*)

A note on methodology: ICEC downloaded all the available EMLs from the WHO website in October 2015 and used the “find” function to search for the following key words: levonorgestrel, ulipristal acetate, norgestrel, contraception, and emergency contraception.

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. “National Medicines List/Formulary/Standard Treatment Guidelines.” Web site: [www.who.int/selection\\_medicines/country\\_lists/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/selection_medicines/country_lists/en/index.html).