

**Introduction of the Abortion Reduction Education Act**  
**Sarah Johnston MD**  
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**Abortion facts**

**The root causes of abortion are unintended pregnancy, poverty, and lack of access to health care.**

§ Unintended pregnancy

- Approximately 6 million American women become pregnant each year. The pregnancy is unintended for 50% (3 million). It is unintended for 80% of pregnant teenagers. One of every two US women aged 15-44 has experienced at least one unintended pregnancy.
- About 50% unintended pregnancies occur among the 7% women ages 15-44 who do not use contraception.

§ Lack of access to health care is the main reason women don't use contraception.

- 15% US women of childbearing age are poor; 17% have no health insurance.

§ 43 % unintended pregnancies result in abortion (1.4 million a year)

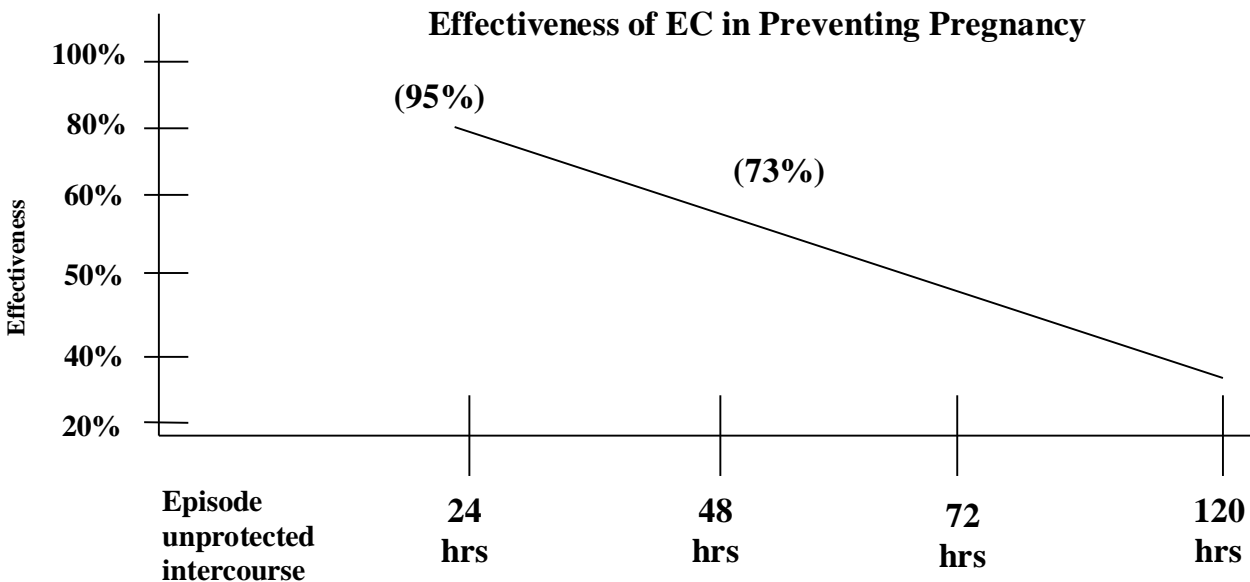
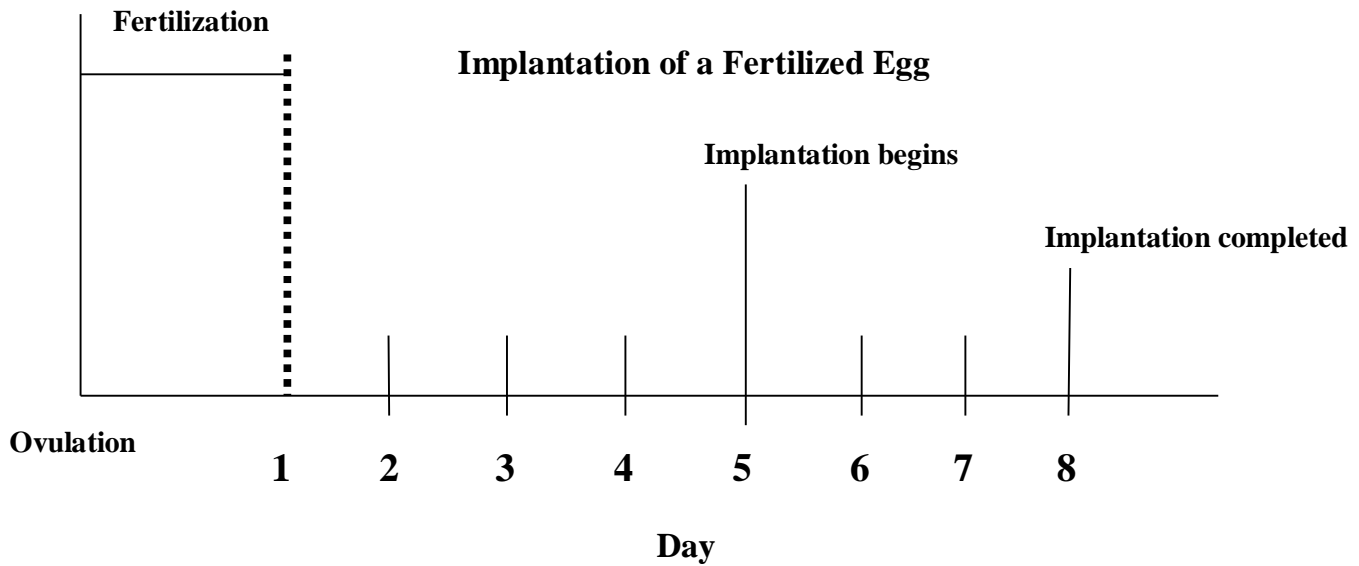
- 44% result in births the mother did not want until later or at all, and 13% result in miscarriage.

§ The health risks for mothers and children when pregnancy is unintended include

- Domestic violence, drug and alcohol use, delayed prenatal care, and low birth weight babies. One study comparing cohorts born before and after 1973 suggests unwanted children are more likely to commit crimes as young adults

**Emergency contraception (EC)** became available by prescription in 1999. When taken within 72 hours of unprotected or inadequately protected intercourse it is 89% effective in preventing pregnancy. EC is a contraceptive, not the abortion pill RU-486. RU-486 acts by terminating a pregnancy while EC acts by preventing pregnancy. The mechanism of action is by preventing ovulation, preventing fertilization of an egg, or rarely, preventing implantation of a fertilized egg. In 2000, EC prevented 51,000 pregnancies in the US. Women who use EC use it correctly, do not use it repeatedly, and use other methods of contraceptives and condoms at the same rate as women who have not used EC. The US abortion rate and rate of unintended pregnancies could be reduced by 50% if EC were available over the counter. The American Medical Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the FDA advisory committees agree that it is so effective and safe that it should be available over the counter.

## HOW EC WORKS



**Barriers to the use of EC:**

- § Patient knowledge: 35% women aged 15-44 presenting to an inner city ER knew about EC and how to use it. Six % had used it.
- § Timely access to the prescription: In 2001, 25% obstetricians and 14% family practitioners reported discussing EC with patients and 80% obstetricians and 36% family practitioners had prescribed EC in the previous year. In Kansas in 2001, only 43% of hospitals reported offering EC to rape victims presenting to the ER.
- § Timely filling of the prescription: Some pharmacists refuse to fill prescriptions for EC. In New Mexico, a survey found that 11% pharmacies stocked EC and 53% could obtain it in 24 hours.

If you want to know more: <http://www.guttmacher.org>  
 EC Website <http://www.not-2-late.com> EC hotline 1-888-not-2-late