

RU486 vs. Emergency Contraception: Understanding the Similarities and Differences

	RU486	Emergency Contraceptive (EC) aka The Morning After Pill
What it is	RU486 is Mifeprax or mifepristone. It is a man-made steroid and is typically used with a second drug, a prostaglandin (known as Misoprostol). This is called a chemical abortion or medical abortion. On September 28, 2000, the Clinton-Gore Administration's FDA approved the sale of RU486 for the performance of abortions up to 49 days after the beginning of the last menstrual period.	High dosage of the artificial steroids found in birth control pills. The two forms approved by the FDA are Preven and Plan B. Both are recommended to be used within 72 hours after intercourse followed by a second dose 12 hours later.
How it works	During pregnancy, the unborn baby requires a chemical called progesterone, naturally produced by the mother. The first drug blocks this and starves and suffocates the baby. The second drug in another visit, the woman is given a second pill or suppositories producing hard labor and expels the dead baby.	Has three possible ways in which it can work. In one way, if you are pregnant when you take EC, it can cause an abortion by making conditions unfavorable for the embryo to attach to the uterine lining.
The controversy	Using both medications, it aborts the baby 92% of the time in the 5th week of pregnancy and only 77% of the time in the 7th week. Clinics that provide only RU486 services do not have to meet licensing requirements. The risk of death with pill-based abortions now appears to be about 10 times that of surgical abortions. 6 women have died from the procedure.	Many concerned medical professionals argue this does not necessarily prevent pregnancy. In some cases, it kills the developing embryo which would make it an abortifacient as it ends the life of an unborn child.
Possible side effects	There are no long term studies to show whether a woman will be permanently damaged; incomplete abortion requiring surgical abortion, serious sepsis blood infections, serious bacterial infections, heavy and extended bleeding, ruptured ectopic pregnancies, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, heart attack, infertility, and death.	There are no long term studies to show whether a woman will be permanently damaged; nausea, vomiting, infertility, ectopic pregnancy, headaches, dizziness, irregular bleeding, blood clot formation.
Profit factor	This procedure is two to three more times expensive than a surgical abortion and requires 4 or more visits to complete.	Millions of dollars stand to be gained by organizations such as Planned Parenthood if ever this is available "over the counter."
Rights of Conscience	This is not available through a prescription or over the counter.	About half the states have laws that provide some form of protection for pharmacists/health care professionals who can object to providing it.
Accessibility	It is usually performed in specified abortion clinics. There is one across from Wright State University with affiliates in Columbus and Akron. There are 2 known RU486 facilities in Ohio: Dayton and Akron.	It is available "over the counter" to anyone age 18 and older.
Other Concerns	Not only the deaths of women and babies, but this idea of a "quick fix" with a pill is becoming a strategy of the opposition; softening abortion to a "pill." The World Health organization would like to present this to third world countries. 100% of women suffer from uterine bleeding, and days of pain. In a third world country, women could bleed to death.	Over the counter means a lack of medical supervision as well as access for sexual predators; marketed to teens and young adults; no protection against sexually transmitted diseases; false advertising and overstating product's usefulness; no long term studies of frequent use. Planned Parenthood wants it to be available to everyone without a prescription - even minors.
Legislation	U.S. Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) has introduced S.511 RU-486 Suspension and Review Act in the U.S. Senate. According to the National Right to Life web site, this bill would suspend the distribution of RU-486.	Planned Parenthood Federation of America introduced the "Ohio Prevention First Act" to promote the non-prescription availability of EC, however the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved it for adult purchase just after the bill was introduced.