

New Zealand Consumer Medicine Information

Postinor® -1 levonorgestrel

What is in this leaflet

This leaflet answers some common questions about Postinor-1. It does not contain all the available information. It does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

All medicines have risks and benefits. Your doctor or pharmacist will have discussed and considered the risks of you taking Postinor-1 against the benefits they expect it will have for you.

If you have any concerns about taking this medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Your doctor and pharmacist have more information

Keep this leaflet with the medicine.

You may need to read it again.

What Postinor-1 is used for

Postinor-1 is an emergency contraceptive only. Postinor-1 is not intended as a regular method of contraception.

Postinor-1 is an emergency contraceptive that can be used within 72 hours (3 days) of unprotected sex or if your usual contraceptive method has failed.

Postinor-1 contains a synthetic luteal hormone-like active substance called levonorgestrel.

Postinor-1 prevents about 85% of expected pregnancies when you take it within 72 hours of having unprotected sex. It will not prevent a pregnancy every time and is more effective if you take it as soon as possible after unprotected sex. It is better to take it within 12 hours rather than delay until the third day.

Postinor-1 is thought to work by:

- stopping your ovaries from releasing an egg;
- preventing sperm from fertilising any egg you may have already released.

Postinor-1 can only prevent you from becoming pregnant if you take it within 72 hours of unprotected sex. It does not work if you are already pregnant. If you have unprotected sex after taking Postinor-1, it will not stop you from becoming pregnant. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about why you are taking Postinor-1.

Before you take Postinor-1

You should consult your doctor before you take it if:

- You are pregnant or think that you may already be pregnant. This medicine will not work if you are already pregnant. If you are already pregnant, Postinor-1 cannot terminate pregnancy, because Postinor-1 is not an “abortion pill”.

You may already be pregnant if:

- your period is more than 5 days late, or you have experienced unusual bleeding when your next period is due
- you have had unprotected sex more than 72 hours ago, and since your last period.

The use of Postinor-1 is not advised if:

- you have a disease of your small bowel (such as Crohn's disease) that inhibits the absorption of the medicine
- you have severe liver problems
- you have a history of ectopic pregnancy (where the baby develops somewhere outside the womb)
- you have ever had a disease called salpingitis (inflammation of the Fallopian tubes).

A previous ectopic pregnancy or previous infection of the fallopian tubes increase the risk of a new ectopic pregnancy.

In all women, emergency contraception should be taken as soon as possible after unprotected intercourse. There is some evidence that Postinor-1 may be less effective with increasing body weight or body mass index (BMI), but these data were limited and inconclusive. Therefore, Postinor-1 is still recommended for all women regardless of their weight or BMI.

When you must not take it

Do not take Postinor-1 if:

You are allergic to any of the ingredients of the tablets (See Product description below)
The tablets do not look quite right

Do not take Postinor-1 after the expiry date printed on the pack or if the packaging is torn or shows signs of tampering.

Taking other medicines

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicines, including those purchased from a supermarket or health food store.

Some medicines may prevent Postinor-1 from working effectively. If you have used any of the medicines below during the last 4 weeks, Postinor-1 may be less suitable for you. Your doctor may prescribe another type of (non-hormonal) emergency contraceptive, i.e. a copper intrauterine device (Cu-IUD). If this is not an option for you or if you are unable to see your doctor promptly, you can take a double dose of Postinor-1 (i.e. 2 tablets taken together at the same time):

- barbiturates and other medicines used to treat epilepsy (for example, primidone, phenytoin, and carbamazepine)
- medicines used to treat tuberculosis (for example, rifampicin, rifabutin)
- a treatment for HIV (for example, ritonavir, efavirenz)
- a medicine used to treat fungal infections (griseofulvin)
- herbal remedies containing St John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*).

Speak to your pharmacist or doctor if you need further advice on the correct dose for you.

Consult your doctor as soon as possible after taking the tablets for further advice on a reliable form of regular contraception and to exclude a pregnancy. (See How to take Postinor-1 for further advice).

Postinor-1 may also affect how well other medicines work

- a medicine called cyclosporin (suppresses the immune system).

Pregnancy, breastfeeding and fertility

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, think you may be pregnant or are planning to have a baby, ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice before taking any medicine.

Pregnancy

You should not take this medicine if you are already pregnant. If you do become pregnant even after taking this medicine, it is important that you see your doctor. Your doctor may want to check that the pregnancy is not ectopic (where the baby develops somewhere outside the

womb). This is especially important if you develop severe abdominal pain after taking Postinor-1 or if you have previously had an ectopic pregnancy, Fallopian tube surgery or pelvic inflammatory disease.

Breastfeeding

The active ingredient of this medicine is excreted into your breast milk. Therefore, it is suggested that you take your tablet immediately after a breastfeeding and avoid nursing at least 8 hours following taking this medicine.

Fertility

Postinor-1 increases the possibility of menstruation disturbances which can sometimes lead to an earlier or later ovulation date resulting in a modified fertility date. Although there are no fertility data in the long term, after treatment with Postinor-1 a rapid return to fertility is expected and therefore, regular contraception should be continued or initiated as soon as possible after Postinor-1 use.

Children and adolescents

Postinor-1 is not recommended for children. There is only limited information available on Postinor-1 when taken by women aged 14-16 years and no information on its use in younger women or children.

How to take Postinor-1

Take the tablet as soon as possible, preferably within 12 hours, and no later than 72 hours (3 days) after you have had unprotected sex. Postinor-1 can be taken at any time in your menstrual cycle assuming you are not already pregnant or think you may be pregnant. Do not chew but swallow the tablet whole with water. Do not delay taking the tablet. The tablet works best the sooner you take it after having unprotected sex.

If you are already using a regular method of contraception such as the contraceptive pill, you can continue to take this at your regular times.

If Postinor-1 is used more than once in a menstrual cycle, it is less reliable and it is more likely to upset your menstrual cycle (period).

Postinor-1 does not work as well as regular methods of contraception. Your doctor, practice nurse or family planning clinic can tell you about long-term methods of contraception which are more effective in preventing you from getting pregnant.

This medicine will not protect you against sexually transmitted diseases, only condoms can do this.

Postinor-1 is not indicated for use before the first menstrual bleeding (menarche).

While taking Postinor-1

If you vomit within 3 hours of taking the tablet you should return to your pharmacy, doctor or clinic as the tablet may not be absorbed and you will need to take an additional tablet.

Things you must do

Tell any doctor or pharmacist who are treating you that you have taken Postinor-1

Things you must not do

Do not give Postinor-1 to anyone else

Things to be careful of

If Postinor-1 makes you drowsy or dizzy, do not drive a car or operate machinery.

Postinor-1 contains lactose

Each Postinor-1 tablet contains 142.5 mg lactose monohydrate.

If you have been told by your doctor that you have an intolerance to some sugars, contact your doctor before taking this product.

Side effects

Tell your doctor or pharmacist as soon as possible if you do not feel well after you take Postinor-1.

All medicines have side effects. Often they are not serious but sometimes they can be. You may need medical treatment if you get some side effects.

Do not be alarmed by this list of possible side effects.

You may not experience any of them.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist to answer any questions you may have.

Like all medicines, this medicine can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

Very common (may affect more than 1 in 10 people):

- Feeling sick (nausea)
- You might have some irregular bleeding until your next period
- You might have lower abdominal pain
- Tiredness
- Headache

Common (may affect up to 1 in 10 people):

- Being sick (vomiting). If you are sick, read the section 'What to do if you are sick (vomit)'.
- Your period might be different. Most women will have a normal period at the expected time, but some may have their period later or earlier than normal. You might also have some irregular bleeding or spotting until your next period. If your period is more than 5 days late or is unusually light or unusually heavy, you should contact your doctor as soon as possible.
- You might have tender breasts, diarrhoea, feel dizzy after taking this medicine.

Very rare side effects (may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people):

- Rash, hives, itching, swelling of the face, pelvic pain, painful period.

Other side effects not listed above may also occur in some patients. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you notice anything that is making you feel unwell.

After using Postinor-1

You may experience spotting or vaginal bleeding earlier than expected.

If you do not get your period within 3 weeks of taking the tablets you must see your doctor, as you may be pregnant. If Postinor-1 does not work, you could be pregnant.

Your doctor will order a pregnancy test. There is no evidence that Postinor-1 will harm a baby that develops in your uterus/womb if you use Postinor-1 as described.

Nevertheless, your doctor may want to check that the pregnancy is not ectopic (where the baby develops somewhere outside the womb). This is especially important if you develop severe abdominal pain after taking Postinor-1 or if you have previously had an ectopic pregnancy, Fallopian tube surgery or pelvic inflammatory disease.

Postinor-1 is only intended as an emergency measure. If you have not already done so you should discuss with your doctor other methods of long term contraception.

In case of breast-feeding:

Very small amounts of the active ingredient of this medicine may appear in your breast milk. This is not thought to be harmful to the baby, but if you are worried you can take your tablet immediately after a breast-feeding and avoid nursing at least 8 hours following tablet taking. In this way you are taking your tablet well before the next feed and reducing the amount of active ingredient your baby may take in with the breast milk.

If you take too much (Overdose)

Although there have been no reports of serious harmful effects from taking too many tablets at once, you may feel sick, actually be sick (vomit), or have vaginal bleeding.

Telephone your doctor, or the Poisons Information Centre on 0800 764766 if you take too many Postinor-1 tablets, or if a child has taken Postinor-1.

Product description

Postinor-1 contains one blister sheet containing one flat white tablet. The tablet contains 1.5 milligrams of levonorgestrel and the following inactive ingredients: potato starch, maize starch, silica colloidal anhydrous, magnesium stearate, talc, lactose.

Storage

Keep your tablet in the pack until it is time to take it. If you take the tablet out of the pack it will not keep well.

Keep your tablet in a cool, dry place where the temperature stays below 25°C.

Do not store Postinor-1 or any other medicine in the bathroom or near a sink.

Do not leave it in the car on hot days or on window sills.

Heat and dampness can destroy some medicines.

Keep it where children cannot reach it.

A locked cupboard at least 1½ metres above the ground is a good place to store medicines.

The expiry date is printed on the pack and the foil blister. Do not use Postinor-1 after this expiry date.

Where to go for further information

If you require further information, you should contact your pharmacist, doctor or clinic.

Additional information is also available at the website: www.emergencycontraception.com.au

Supplier:

The distributor for Postinor-1 is:

Bayer New Zealand Limited

3 Argus Place

Hillcrest North

Shore

AUCKLAND 0627

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This leaflet was first prepared in October, 2007 and updated in May 2023.