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MORNING AFTER PILL GOES OTC

WINNIPEG, April 19th, 2005 – Emergency contraception (also known as the morning after pill) was changed to over-the-counter (OTC) status from prescription-only status by Health Canada today. This non-prescription status has been granted to Plan B (levonorgestrel). Plan B contains two 0.75mg tablets of levonorgestrel. The product is recommended to be used within 72 hours of unprotected sex. Treatment consists of a single tablet followed by a second tablet 12 hours later, or both pills can be taken at once. Plan B has been demonstrated to be 88% effective at preventing pregnancy if taken within the recommended period of time.

Approximately 50% of pregnancies are unplanned, with 50% of those resulting in abortion. This leads to over 100,000 abortions per year in Canada. Part of the decision to move Plan B to OTC status was to enhance availability, awareness and knowledge of emergency contraception.