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Contraception is essential in preventing rise in unintended pregnancy during COVID-19

Sexual and reproductive health must remain at the forefront of our minds during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is possible that throughout this crisis we may see a rise in unintended pregnancy as well as incidences of domestic violence, sexual violence and sexual coercion. Unfortunately this could come at a time where our health systems are focused on the prevention and management of the pandemic itself. In addition to general sexual health services, access to pregnancy options including abortion may be impacted over the next 6 months.

Unintended pregnancy rates are already high in Australia. It is estimated that half of all pregnancies are unplanned. It is possible that self-isolation/quarantine measures could see an increase in unprotected sexual activity without reliable forms of contraception. These circumstances may contribute to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections in an environment where support systems and personal wellbeing have been affected.

SHINE SA asks that people consider all of their contraceptive choices at this time. This includes long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) options, especially if they do not wish to become pregnant in the near future. These options can be discussed with a general practitioner.

It's also important that people are aware that they can access the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP) from community pharmacies. Oral emergency contraception is effective up to 120 hours after unprotected sex but the sooner it is taken, the greater the effectiveness.

South Australians looking for advice on any sexual health issue including contraception and unintended pregnancy can call SHINE SA's Sexual Healthline. This is a free and confidential service provided by SHINE SA's sexual health nurses.

Call: 1300 883 793; Toll free: 1800 188 171 (country callers only). The Sexual Healthline is open Monday - Friday, 9:00 am - 12:30pm.

Australians can also call 1800 RESPECT, the national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling and information referral service. This service is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Service is a South Australian service for anyone who has been sexually assaulted. Call 8226 8777 or visit the [Yarrow Place website](#) for more information.

Visit the SHINE SA website for more information on [Emergency Contraception](#), [Choices in Contraception](#) and [Safer Sex](#).

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