

# Plan B decision is good for girls

Someone in the Obama administration you've probably never even heard of made an unprecedented decision concerning you last week.

U.S. Health and Human Services Department Secretary Kathleen Sebelius decided that Plan B One-Step, which you probably know as the "morning after pill," should not be available to you without a doctor's prescription. Scientists in the Food and Drug Administration spent 10 months poring over charts, figures and studies about the drug, and they de-

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decided it's safe "for all females of child-bearing potential."

I want you to note that the FDA said the morning after pill is safe for all females, not all women. You've been

female since before you were born, but you're not a woman yet.

I know you've had breasts since you were nine or 10, and that a little — or maybe a big — curve has been in your hips since you were 11 or 12. You might grumble about menstruation, but it probably now feels like the natural occurrence it is, not the embarrassing interruption you thought it was at first. You've been feeling sexual for several years. You're at an age at which you may even feel sexy, and drawing male attention feels good.

But you're not a woman yet.

Your body has been able to do all the things a grown woman's body does, including carry a baby to term, since you were 12. 4 years old a girl's ov-

an's body does, including carry a baby to term, since you were 12.4 years old, a girl's average age at menarche. But girl, you are a child. And that Sebelius woman didn't think it was wise to put emergency contraception into the hands of a child.

You do know what emergency contraception is, right? You would use it within 72 hours of unprotected vaginal intercourse to have an 89 percent chance at preventing a pregnancy. You can read and follow directions, so I know you wouldn't do anything irresponsible, like say, try to ingest a morning after pill after you already know you're pregnant, or buy several packets of pills and take more than the recommended dosage, just to be on the safer side. You might have done that when you were 11, or at 9, the ages at which some women I know were when their periods started, but not now. You might participate in choking games or drink illegally, but you wouldn't do that, right?

You're a child and you shouldn't be having sex. I say that not in judgment of your morality or worth as a human being, but out of concern for your emotional health and your overall well-being for the rest of your life. Sex is fun, but that's not all it is. Despite the best of precautions, it sometimes creates a life, and creating a life will change your life forever.

And I do hope you're trying to access emergency contraception despite the best of precautions. I hope your parents, doctor, school, house of worship or some combination of the above taught you that sex is serious and explained your most effective and least effective options for preventing pregnancy, STDs and STIs. I hope you didn't just trust the guy or the advice of one of your girlfriends. I hope you didn't just read a book or watch a YouTube video and then try the suggested method of protection yourself, especially if those sources left you with unanswered questions. I hope your advisers didn't leave it at abstinence because even though that really is the biggest ounce of prevention, they know it's the

**See WILLIAMS, Page H3**



