

What is PrEP?

Pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, is a drug that people who don't have HIV use to lower their risks of getting HIV. It stops HIV from infecting the body by building a wall around each cell.

How does PrEP work?

PrEP stops HIV from making you sick. It builds a wall around your body that makes it hard for HIV to infect you when you take it regularly.

This makes it less likely that you will get HIV from things like needles for drugs or having sex. To put it simply, PrEP is like a wall that keeps HIV out.

How well does PrEP work?

PrEP is a very good way to avoid getting HIV.

- When taken as directed, PrEP cuts the chance of getting HIV from sex by about 99%.
- We don't know as much about how well PrEP pills work for people who inject drugs, but we do know that when taken as directed, they lower the risk of getting HIV by at least 74%. If you don't take PrEP as directed, it won't work as well.

Do I need PrEP

- You have had anal or vaginal sex in the last six months with someone who has HIV (especially if the partner's viral load is

unknown or detectable); • You haven't used a condom regularly;
or • You have been diagnosed with an STD in the last six months.
• You inject drugs with an HIV-positive partner or share needles,
syringes, or other injecting equipment (e.g., cookers).

You have been given PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) and say you
are still acting in a risky way, or you have used more than one run
of PEP.

• Even if you don't do any of the things above, you can still choose
to take PrEP. Talk to your doctor or nurse.

How do I begin PrEP?

If you think PrEP might be right for you, talk to your doctor.

You must get an HIV test before starting PrEP to make sure you
don't have HIV.

While you're on PrEP, you should keep up with your doctor's
appointments for follow-up care and HIV tests.

Refills for prescriptions

Ask your doctor about follow-up visits that can be done over the
phone.

How do you take PrEP?

There are two main ways to take PrEP: every day or whenever you
want.

1. Everyday PrEP: This means taking PrEP every day, like a pill. Users who have regular or frequent sex or who take drugs should think about this choice. Daily PrEP protects against HIV all the time, so it's perfect for people who want constant treatment.

2. On-demand PrEP: This is also called "event-driven PrEP," and it means taking PrEP before and after a sexual action that could transmit HIV. It works for people who don't have sex very often or who can plan ahead when they'll have sex.

How it works:

The first step is to take two PrEP pills between two and twenty-four hours before you plan to have sex.

This first double dose helps the body quickly build up levels of the medicine that protects it.

- One pill: About 24 hours after the first dose, take another one of the PrEP pills.
- One pill: One more PrEP pill should be taken about 24 hours after the second dose.
- Many studies have shown that the "2-1-1" plan helps keep guys safe when they have anal sex without a condom.
- We don't know how "on-demand" PrEP works for straight and gay men and women, drug users, and transgender people.

Is PrEP secure?

Even though PrEP is safe, it can make you sick, give you headaches, make you tired, or give you stomach pain. Most of the time, these side effects get better over time.

- Talk to your doctor about any side effects that are bad or last a long time.

How long does PrEP work?

- For open anal sex, taking PrEP pills every day for about 7 days will keep you from getting HIV the most.
- If you take PrEP pills every day for 21 days, they will protect you from both open vaginal sex and drug injections.
- There are no studies that show how well the PrEP pill works for insertive sex (anal or vaginal).

Is it okay to take PrEP while I'm pregnant or breastfeeding?

If your partner has HIV and you want to get pregnant, you should talk to your doctor about PrEP if you aren't already taking it. As you try to get pregnant, while you are pregnant, or while you are nursing, PrEP may be able to help keep you and your baby from getting HIV.

Teenagers: Can they take PrEP?

Yes. Teenagers without HIV who weigh at least 77 pounds (35 kg) and are at risk of getting HIV from sex or injecting drugs can use PrEP pills.

What should I do if I need to stop PrEP?

A number of things cause people to stop taking PrEP:

- Because of changes in your life, your chance of getting HIV has gone down.
- You don't want to take your pills as directed or forget to do so a lot of the time.
- You can't get your tabs in person from your doctor as often as they suggest.
- The medicine is giving you side effects that are making your life hard.
- Blood tests show that PrEP is making your body do dangerous things.

Talk to your doctor about other ways to avoid getting HIV that might work better for you.

How do I start taking PrEP again if I stopped?

You should let your doctor know that you want to start taking PrEP again. Before you start PrEP, you will need to get an HIV test to make sure you don't have it.

If I think I may have been exposed to HIV recently, can I only take PrEP once?

People who are at high risk for getting HIV should not use PrEP. People who may have been exposed to HIV in the last 72 hours should not use PrEP.

- If you think you may have been exposed to HIV in the last 72 hours, talk to your doctor, a doctor in the hospital room, or a doctor at an urgent care center about PEP.

Why do I have to follow the directions and take PrEP?

- Your doctor will tell you how to take PrEP so that it works.
- What if you don't take PrEP as directed? Your blood might not have enough of the medicine to stop the virus.
- If you have the right amount of medicine in your blood, HIV can't take hold and spread through your body.

Will PrEP get in the way of my hormone therapy?

If you are taking hormone treatment and PrEP, there is no known drug interaction between the two. You can also take them at the same time

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If I take PrEP, can I stop using condoms?

PrEP can protect you from HIV, but it can't protect you from other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or pregnancy.

Condoms can help prevent gonorrhea and chlamydia, which are STDs that can be spread through genital fluids. However, they aren't as good at stopping syphilis, human papillomavirus, and genital herpes, which can be spread through sores or cuts on the skin.

FAQs

1. Does missing a dose of PrEP make it less effective?

If you miss some doses of PrEP, it may not work as well at stopping HIV spread. What happens when you miss a dose, though, varies depending on how often you normally take the medicine. Missing doses on a regular basis makes PrEP much less effective. Take your next dose as soon as you remember. If it's been less than 12 hours since your last dose, take the missed dose right away and then go back to your normal routine. If it's been more than 12 hours, don't take the dose you missed. Instead, go back to your usual routine. In this case, it's important to use extra ways to avoid getting HIV for the next two days, like condoms.

2. What should I do if I forget to take my medicine and then plan to have sex?

If you forget to take your PrEP and are planning to have sex in the next few days, you should talk to your doctor about it. They might suggest more ways to lower the risk of getting HIV, like using condoms or taking an extra dose of PrEP (called a "loading dose" if it's within 24 hours of the missed dose). You should also think about getting checked for HIV and other STIs on a regular basis, especially if you do things that put you at high risk.

3. Can I use PrEP even though my kidneys hurt?

People who have problems with their kidneys may still be able to take PrEP, but they may need to change the amount they take. If you have worries about your kidneys, you should talk to your

doctor before taking PrEP.

4: Is it safe to use PrEP while going abroad?

In general, it is safe to use PrEP while going abroad. Nevertheless, it is important to prepare ahead of time and make sure you have enough medicine for the whole trip. Also, find out where you can get an HIV test and find health care services when you get there.

5. Can I use PrEP if I'm already taking other drugs?

Before you start taking PrEP, you should tell your doctor about any other medicines you're taking. Some drugs may combine with PrEP, which could make it less effective or raise the risk of side effects. Your doctor or nurse can help you figure out if it is safe to take PrEP with other medicines you are taking.