

Prevention Before Exposure (PrEP)

What is PrEP?

PrEP is the common name for a medicine that can help reduce a person's risk of getting HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. The clinical term for this treatment is **Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis**, which means "prevention before exposure."

PrEP is used to reduce the risk of HIV infection in people at higher-than-average risk. This includes men who have sex with men, people who do not use a condom every time they have sex, IV drug users, and anyone who has an HIV-positive partner.

Currently, the only FDA-approved medicine for this purpose is Truvada. Truvada is a combination of 2 medicines used to treat active HIV infections (called tenofovir and emtricitabine).

How effective is it?

When taken every day, PrEP has been shown to prevent HIV infection in **9 out of 10** people who are at high risk.

- PrEP becomes much **less** effective if it is not taken every day. **PrEP is not a vaccine.** People who use it must commit to taking the medicine every single day.
- PrEP becomes even **more** effective when combined with other prevention methods, including condoms. Also, condoms will protect you from other sexually transmitted infections. PrEP does not prevent other infections.



What do I need to do?

- 1** Before starting PrEP, have an HIV test and a kidney test.
- 2** Take PrEP every single day. Continue to use a condom every time you have sex.
- 3** Get an HIV test every 3 months. See your healthcare provider for kidney testing every 6 months.

What are the side effects?

Side effects are rare, but may include:

- **Nausea or headache.** This usually goes away within a month.
- **Kidney problems.** This side effect is rare. Even so, blood tests for kidney function are required at least every 6 months. You may need them more often if you have other risk factors.
- **Decreased bone density.** This side effect is also very rare. The effect is mild and has been seen to reverse if Truvada is stopped.

Less is known about long-term effects. However, no major issues have been seen in people taking Truvada for 5 years.

Do I still need to be tested for HIV?

Yes. You need to be tested for HIV every 3 months. Here's why:

- Even though the risk of getting infected with HIV is greatly reduced while on PrEP, there is still a small chance you could get infected.
- If you were to get infected with HIV, you would need different medicines. A person who has an active HIV infection needs at least 3 or 4 anti-HIV medicines.
- If you only take Truvada after being infected, you will not have all the medicines you need. This will allow the virus to develop resistance to the medicines you are taking.
- Developing resistance to medicines would limit your treatment options in the future.

Therefore, you must get an HIV test every 3 months while taking Truvada. Only 3 months' worth of pills will be given at a time. You need an HIV test every 3 months to get refills.

How much does PrEP cost?

Cost is usually covered by insurance.

In cases where it is not covered, there is a co-pay coupon program that can greatly reduce the cost. You must apply online, then a card will be sent in the mail. Present this card at the pharmacy when you collect your prescription.

To apply for the co-pay coupon card, visit:

<https://www.gileadadvancingaccess.com/copay-coupon-card>

Where can I learn more?

For more detailed information about PrEP, please visit the CDC website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/prep.html>

Intermountain Healthcare complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Se proveen servicios de interpretación gratis. Hable con un empleado para solicitarlo. 我們將根據您的需求提供免費的口譯服務。請找尋工作人員協助。

© 2018 Intermountain Healthcare. All rights reserved. The content presented here is for your information only. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice, and it should not be used to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease. Please consult your healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns. More health information is available at intermountainhealthcare.org. Patient and Provider Publications FS572 - 04/18 (Last reviewed - 03/18) Also available in Spanish.