



LET'S STOP HIV TOGETHER

PrEP Medication Guide: Reduce Your Risk of Getting HIV

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is a medicine that helps reduce your risk of getting HIV. This brochure provides information on how PrEP prevents HIV, its side effects and safety, paying for PrEP, and available resources.

Learn more at: [cdc.gov/StopHIVTogether](https://www.cdc.gov/StopHIVTogether).



Ending
the
HIV
Epidemic

Take Charge of Your Health With PrEP and Prevent HIV

PrEP stands for pre-exposure prophylaxis. The definition of “prophylaxis” is an action to prevent disease. The goal of PrEP is to prevent HIV infection from taking hold in your body by taking medicine before you are exposed to the virus.



PrEP is a medicine prescribed to people who do not have HIV but are at risk for getting it:

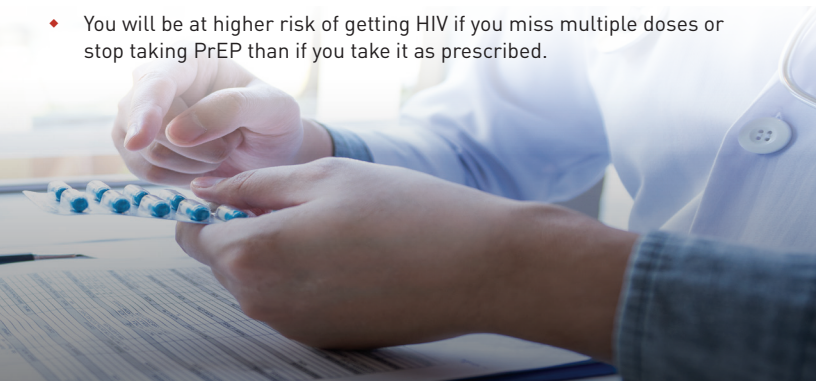
- ◆ PrEP is highly effective for preventing HIV. It greatly reduces the risk of getting HIV from sex when taken as prescribed.
- ◆ Although there is less information about how effective PrEP is among people who inject drugs, we do know that PrEP lowers the risk of getting HIV when taken as prescribed.

Two medications are approved for use as PrEP: Truvada® and Descovy®.

- ◆ Truvada® (or generic equivalent) is for all people at risk through sex or injection drug use.
- ◆ Descovy® is for people at risk through sex, except for people assigned female at birth who are at risk of getting HIV from vaginal sex.

How Should This Medicine Be Used?

- ◆ You must take PrEP as prescribed for it to be effective.
- ◆ Do not stop taking PrEP without talking to your health care provider. When your supply of medicine starts to run low, contact your provider or pharmacy to get more.
- ◆ You will be at higher risk of getting HIV if you miss multiple doses or stop taking PrEP than if you take it as prescribed.



What Side Effects Can This Medication Cause?

Most people do not have side effects while taking PrEP. However, you might experience some of the following when you begin taking the medication:

- ◆ Upset stomach.
- ◆ Headache.
- ◆ Vomiting.
- ◆ Loss of appetite.

These side effects usually fade during the first month of taking PrEP. Tell your health care provider if any of these symptoms are severe or do not go away.





What Should I Do if I Forget a Dose?

- ◆ If you are taking PrEP daily, take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue your regular dosing schedule.
- ◆ Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed one.
- ◆ An occasional missed dose will not greatly impact overall effectiveness, but it is important to take the medicine as prescribed. If you miss doses frequently, talk to your health care provider.

Tips to Help You Take Your PrEP



Match your medicine schedule to your life: add taking your medicines to things you already do each day, like brushing your teeth or eating a meal.



Try a pill tray with compartments for each day of the week so you can see whether or not you took your pills that day.



Set the alarm on your clock, watch, or cell phone for the time you take your medicines.



Use a calendar to check off the days you have taken your medicines, and circle the date of your next medical appointment or prescription refill.



Download a free app for your phone that can help remind you of your medical appointments and when it's time to take your medicines.



Keep a reminder note on a mirror, on your refrigerator, or anywhere else you will see it each day. Put your next appointment card there, too.



Talk to another PrEP user about what works for them.

Can I Stop Using Condoms if I Take PrEP?

- ◆ PrEP provides protection from HIV but does not protect against other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
- ◆ Condoms can help prevent other STDs that can be transmitted through genital fluids, such as gonorrhea and chlamydia.
- ◆ Condoms are less effective at preventing STDs that can be transmitted through sores or cuts on the skin, like human papillomavirus, genital herpes, and syphilis.



What Other Information Should I Know About PrEP?

- ◆ Call your health care provider immediately if you have any unusual problems while taking this medication or if you have any of the following: fever or chills (especially with sore throat), cough, rash, or other signs of infection.
- ◆ Do not let anyone else take your medication.
- ◆ Store your medicine in a secure container, tightly closed, and out of reach of children.
- ◆ Keep your medicine at room temperature and away from excessive heat and moisture.

If I Am Not at Ongoing Risk for Getting HIV, Can I Take PrEP Only When I'm at Risk?

Taking PrEP only when you are at risk for getting HIV is known as “on-demand” PrEP.

- ◆ It is also known as “intermittent,” “non-daily,” “event-driven,” or “off-label” PrEP use.
- ◆ The type of “on-demand” PrEP that has been studied is the “2-1-1” schedule. This means taking 2 pills 2-24 hours before sex, 1 pill 24 hours after the first dose, and 1 pill 24 hours after the second dose.
- ◆ There is scientific evidence that the “2-1-1” schedule provides effective protection for gay and bisexual men when having anal sex without a condom.
- ◆ We don't know how “on-demand” PrEP works for heterosexual men and women, people who inject drugs, and transgender people.

Some health departments in the United States and some health organizations in Europe and Canada are offering guidance for “on-demand” PrEP as an alternative to daily PrEP for gay and bisexual men at risk for HIV.

This type of use is not currently part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) guidelines for PrEP use, which recommend daily use for those at risk for HIV. Taking PrEP once a day is currently the only US Food and Drug Administration-approved schedule for taking PrEP to prevent HIV. When taken as prescribed, PrEP is highly effective for preventing HIV.

Anyone considering on-demand PrEP should discuss the issue with their health care provider.

If Problems with Alcohol or Other Substances Are Getting in the Way:

Talk to your health care provider.

Seek treatment if you are ready. To find alcohol and substance use treatment facilities and programs near you, visit: [findtreatment.samhsa.gov](https://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov).

Use support groups and programs to stay on track.

Seek counseling to support your mental health.

Choosing to stop using drugs or alcohol is not easy, but it can be done. Quitting will improve your health, wellbeing, and relationships with others.

How Can I Pay for PrEP?

Most insurance plans and state Medicaid programs cover PrEP. There are also other programs that provide PrEP for free or at a reduced cost:

- ◆ *Ready, Set, PrEP* makes PrEP medication available at no cost to those who qualify, regardless of income. Visit: [getyourprep.com](https://www.getyourprep.com) to learn more.
- ◆ Co-pay assistance programs help lower the costs of PrEP medications. Income is not a factor in eligibility. Visit: [gileadadvancingaccess.com](https://www.gileadadvancingaccess.com) or [tevahivgenerics.com](https://www.tevahivgenerics.com) to learn more.
- ◆ A manufacturer's medication assistance program covers the cost of PrEP medication with income guidelines. Visit: [gileadadvancingaccess.com](https://www.gileadadvancingaccess.com) to learn more.
- ◆ Some states have PrEP assistance programs. Some cover medication, some cover clinical visits and lab costs, and some cover both. Visit: [nastad.org/prepcost-resources/prep-assistance-programs](https://www.nastad.org/prepcost-resources/prep-assistance-programs) to learn more.

Other PrEP Resources

- ◆ Find a health care provider to prescribe PrEP at: [prelocator.org](https://www.prelocator.org).
- ◆ Learn more about how to protect yourself and get information tailored to meet your needs from CDC's HIV Risk Reduction Tool. Visit: [hivrisk.cdc.gov](https://www.hivrisk.cdc.gov).
- ◆ For more information, visit: [cdc.gov/StopHIVTogether](https://www.cdc.gov/StopHIVTogether).

You can also access this information by calling
CDC-INFO at **800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)**.



LEARN MORE AT
[CDC.GOV/STOPHIVTOGETHER](https://www.cdc.gov/stopHIVtogether)



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