

# PrEP & PEP

## BASIC FACTS

PrEP

and

PEP

## What's Pre-exposure Prophylaxis PrEP?

Pre → **before.**  
Exposure → into contact with HIV  
Prophylaxis → treatment to prevent an infection from happening

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is an HIV prevention strategy where HIV-negative individuals take anti-HIV medications before coming into contact with HIV to reduce their risk of becoming infected. The medications work to prevent HIV from establishing infection inside the body.

**PrEP** has been shown to reduce risk of HIV infection through sex for gay and bisexual men, transgender women, and heterosexual men and women, as well as among people who inject drugs.

**It does not protect against other sexually transmitted infections (STI) or pregnancy. It is not a cure for HIV.**

## What is the difference between PrEP & PEP?

Post → **After**  
Exposure → into contact with HIV  
Prophylaxis → treatment to prevent an infection from happening.

Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is an HIV PREVENTION strategy where HIV-negative individuals take HIV medications after coming into contact with HIV to reduce their risk of becoming infected. PEP is a month-long course of drugs and must be started within 72 hours after possible exposure.

### WHO DOES PrEP WORK FOR?

PrEP has been shown to help reduce HIV infection risk in multiple studies. The trial showed that PrEP reduces the risk of HIV infection among gay and bisexual men and transgender women. Two large trials, showed that PrEP also reduces the risk of HIV infection among heterosexual men and women. The Bangkok Tenofovir Study demonstrated that PrEP works for people who inject

drugs.

## EFFECTIVENESS

PrEP provides 92%-99% reduction in HIV risk for HIV-negative individuals who take the pills every day as directed. If a daily dose is missed, the level of HIV protection may decrease. It only works if you take it. People who use PrEP correctly and consistently have higher levels of protection against HIV and experts recommend PrEP be used daily to achieve the highest level of protection.

### A FEW THINGS TO NOTE:

*When starting PrEP, it takes at least seven days to reach high levels of protection against HIV.*

*When stopping PrEP, individuals should continue using PrEP for four weeks after the last significant exposure.*

*PrEP does not protect against other sexually transmitted infections (STI) or pregnancy. It is not a cure for HIV.*

PrEP is generally safe and well tolerated. Most people on PrEP report experiencing no side effects, but some side effects were reported in clinical trials. Participants in the study reported side effects that fall into these main

categories;

**NAUSEA:** 9% of those who received Truvada reported nausea in the first month, compared with 5% of those who received placebo. After the first month, there was no difference in reported rates of nausea among those who received Truvada and those who received placebo.

**HEADACHES:** 4.5% of participants who received Truvada reported headaches, compared with 3.3% of those who received placebo.  
**Weight loss:** 2.2% of those who received Truvada reported unintentional weight loss of more than 5%, compared with 1.1% of placebo users

Small increases in **SERUM CREATININE:** Truvada is known to cause small increases in serum creatinine, a naturally occurring molecule filtered by the kidneys. In this study, 0.3% of those who received Truvada experienced mild increases in serum creatinine that persisted until the next test. Creatinine levels went back down once these participants stopped taking PrEP. Four of the five participants restarted PrEP without recurrence of the creatinine increase. Investigators monitored kidney function throughout

the study and found no serious problems. For most people, these side effects went away on their own after the first few weeks of taking Truvada, or when the medication was stopped.

**STAY SAFE!**  
**USE CONDOMS**  
and  
**LUBRICANTS,**  
**USE PrEP**  
and in case you  
**didn't;**  
**USE PEP**

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