

# TAKING PrEP—

A Daily Pill to Reduce Your Risk of Getting HIV

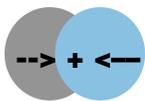


## Take charge of your health and prevent HIV with PrEP



### *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 by taking medicine before you are exposed to the virus.



- PrEP is a medicine prescribed to people who do not have HIV infection but are at high risk for getting it.
- PrEP is a combination of two medicines to prevent HIV, which ensures you are getting the right combined daily dose for the medicine to work.

## How does PrEP help prevent HIV infection?



- The two medications that make up PrEP block the virus’s ability to start infections.
- If you take PrEP daily, the presence of the medication in your blood and tissues can stop the virus from establishing itself in your body.
- **PrEP is highly effective as long as you take it every day.** Condoms provide additional protection against HIV, as well as most sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and unintended pregnancy.

## How should this medicine be used?

- You must take one tablet by mouth every day.
- Do not stop taking PrEP without talking to your doctor. When your supply of medicine starts to run low, contact your doctor or pharmacy to get more.
- You will be at higher risk of becoming infected with HIV if you miss multiple doses or stop taking PrEP than if you take it every day.

## What should I do if I forget a dose?



- 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 every day. If you miss doses frequently, talk to your doctor.

## 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 doctor if any of these symptoms are severe or do not go away.

## What other information should I know?

Call your doctor 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*

## What other information should I know?

- Do not let anyone else take your medication.
- Store your medicine in the container it came in, tightly closed, and out of reach of children.
- Keep it at room temperature and away from excessive heat and moisture.

## Take your PrEP medication daily to ensure you are protected

The goal of PrEP is to prevent HIV infection from taking hold if you are exposed to the virus. Taking your PrEP medicine regularly is critical to keep from getting HIV. For PrEP to work, you need to have enough medicine in your body at all times. When you miss doses, you make it harder for the medicine to protect you.



*Taking PrEP every day gives you the most protection.*



*Not taking PrEP regularly greatly lowers your protection against HIV.*

## Is PrEP all you need?

Even though PrEP is one important tool for protecting yourself from HIV, no method offers 100% protection. While taking your PrEP medicine, you can further reduce your chance of getting HIV by:

- Using condoms during sex
- Cleaning injection equipment if you inject drugs

Plus, while PrEP greatly reduces your risk for contracting HIV, it won't protect you from other sexually transmitted infections. ***Together, these methods offer more complete protection.***

## 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.
- 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. CDC's "**Every Dose, Every Day**" app is available for free in the iTunes app store and Google Play.
- 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.

## PrEP medications are very safe

Some people in clinical studies of PrEP had early side effects, such as an upset stomach or loss of appetite, but these were mild and usually went away in the first month. Some people also had a mild headache. No serious side effects were observed. You should tell your health care provider if these or other symptoms become severe or do not go away.



### *You can get support for taking your medicine*



- Talk to another PrEP user about what works for them.
- Find a PrEP user support group or online forum.
- Ask friends or family members to remind and support you.
- Find a community program that can assist you.
- Use other services provided by pharmacists or social workers if you have access to them.

## Paying for your medicine

PrEP is covered by most health insurance programs and Medicaid. But if you do have related out-of-pocket expenses like co-pays or deductibles, a **co-pay assistance program** will help you cover these costs. Co-pay assistance can be obtained from the drug manufacturer, a non-profit co-pay foundation, or both.



If you do not have a health insurance plan that covers PrEP, a **medication assistance program (MAP)**, may provide medicine to you, at no cost. These assistance programs may have limits on the amount of money you can earn each year to qualify for the program. This income limit is not a fixed amount, but is based on the federal poverty level, which may change each year. For most assistance programs, household incomes must fall below 400% or 500% of the federal poverty level.

- Links to Co-pay assistance programs, medication assistance programs, (MAP) and other resources that may help you access PrEP are provided on **page 7**.

## If problems with alcohol or other substances are getting in the way

- Talk to your healthcare provider.
- Seek treatment if you are ready, and to find alcohol and substance abuse 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, well-being, and relationships with others.



## Visit these additional online resources:



### **Help with Co-Pays**

Gilead Advancing Access Co-pay Card,

- [Gileadcopay.com](https://www.gileadcopay.com/)

Patient Access Network Foundation,

- [panfoundation.org/index.php/en/patients/assistance-programs](https://panfoundation.org/index.php/en/patients/assistance-programs)

Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF),

- [Copays.org/diseases/hiv-aids-and-prevention](https://www.copays.org/diseases/hiv-aids-and-prevention)

### **Help Paying for Medication**

Gilead Medication Assistance Program,

- [Truvada.com/truvada-patient-assistance](https://www.truvada.com/truvada-patient-assistance)

### **Other PrEP Resources**

Find a Healthcare Provider to prescribe PrEP,

- [Prelocator.org](https://www.prelocator.org/)

The CDC PrEP page

- [CDC.gov/hiv/basics/prep.html](https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/prep.html)

CDC-INFO is the CDC's national contact center, providing information to the public, healthcare providers, and public health professionals. CDC-INFO offers live agents to help you find the up-to-date, reliable, consistent, and science-based health information you're looking for, on more than 750 health topics.

You can also e-mail your questions to CDC-INFO at any time.

[CDC.gov/info](https://www.cdc.gov/info)

CDC-INFO distributes of printed materials through the CDC-INFO On Demand ordering system. On Demand is a webpage where you can order or download CDC materials free of charge.

[CDC.gov/cdc-info](https://www.cdc.gov/cdc-info)

You can also call:

**CDC-INFO @ 800-232-4636**

