PrEP Basics

PrEP stands for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis

The word "prophylaxis" means to prevent or control the spread of an infection or disease.

PrEP is an HIV prevention option that works by taking one pill every day.

PrEP can help prevent you from getting HIV if you are exposed to the virus.

How Does It Work?

In several studies of PrEP, the risk of getting HIV infection was much lower — about 99% lower — for those who took the medicines consistently than for those who didn’t take the pill.

Some of the same medicines prescribed for the treatment of HIV can also be prescribed for its prevention.

When taken every day, PrEP can provide a high level of protection against HIV, but only condoms protect against other STDs like syphilis and gonorrhea.

People who use PrEP should take the medicine every day and return to their health care provider every 3 months for follow-up and prescription refills.

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.

Start Talking. Stop HIV.