

Daily PrEP: A User's Guide

PrEP To Prevent HIV



PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is safe and effective medicine that prevents HIV. PrEP is available as a daily pill (Truvada or its generic, or Descovy) or an injection you receive every two months.

Daily PrEP

Taking one PrEP pill once per day is effective at stopping HIV:

- During any kind of sex or while injecting drugs
- For people of any gender or sexual orientation



Take PrEP every day.

- Take daily PrEP even on the days when you do not have sex or inject drugs.
- Consider taking PrEP pills only before and after sex if you are a man who has sex with men.

If you have trouble taking a daily pill:

- Talk to your health care provider about switching to a PrEP injection every two months.
- If you are a man who has sex with men, you can take PrEP pills only before and after sex.

To remember to take your pill:

- Set a daily reminder on your phone or in your calendar.
- Take PrEP before or after a daily activity, such as when you eat breakfast or go to bed.
- Always carry a PrEP pill in a pillbox or wrapped in aluminum foil. This way, if you forget to take it at home or your plans change, you will still have PrEP with you.

If you have anal sex, PrEP works very well at preventing HIV, even if you occasionally forget to take a pill. If you have receptive vaginal sex, PrEP works best if you take the pill every day.

Check In With Your Provider

Check in with your provider every three months to refill your prescription and get tested for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Some providers offer check-ins by phone or video call. Tell your provider if:

- Anything makes it difficult for you to take PrEP
- Side effects are bothering you
- You experience fever, swollen glands, or a rash — these may be early signs you have HIV

Take Care on PrEP

- PrEP reduces your risk of getting HIV during sex by about 99% when taken as prescribed. Using condoms provides additional protection against HIV.
- PrEP only prevents HIV. To prevent other STIs, get regular STI testing and use condoms. To prevent pregnancy, use condoms or other birth control.

PrEP works even when you drink alcohol or use drugs. It does not interfere with hormone therapy or any kind of birth control. If you become pregnant, you do not need to stop taking PrEP.

Stay on PrEP

- Stay on PrEP if you are sexually active and may be exposed to HIV.
- Speak with your provider if you want to stop PrEP or if you stopped and want to restart.
- If you stop PrEP, use condoms or another method to prevent HIV.

Address Any Side Effects

PrEP may cause mild side effects, including nausea, upset stomach, fatigue, and headaches. These side effects often get better or go away during the first month of taking PrEP pills. Talk to your provider if side effects continue to bother you.

- To prevent nausea, take PrEP with a snack. To make nausea less noticeable, take PrEP before bed. To relieve nausea, try ginger candy or peppermint tea.
- To reduce gas or bloating, try an over-the-counter gas reliever.
- If soft stools bother you, try a fiber supplement.

Medicaid and most health insurance plans should cover PrEP without any copayments. If you have trouble paying for PrEP, talk to your provider about whether financial assistance is available for you.

For more information and
additional user's guides, visit
alabamapublichealth.gov/hiv/prep.html
or scan the QR code.

