PrEP vs. PEP: What's the Difference?

Understand your options for preventing HIV



What is PrEP?

PrEP stands for pre-exposure prophylaxis. It's a medication that can protect you from HIV.

Who should use PrEP?

- PrEP is for people who don't have HIV and may be exposed to HIV through sex or injection drug use.
- PrEP is not for people who have HIV, or were recently exposed to HIV.



How to use PrEP

Talk to a clinician who can prescribe PrEP after giving you a test to make sure you don't have HIV.

Together, you and your clinician can decide which form of PrEP is right for you:



Oral PrEP
Take a pill as directed and visit your clinician every few months for follow-up care, refills and tests.



Injectable PrEP shots
See your clinician every 2 or 6 months for your shot, depending on which medicine you're taking, as well as for follow-up care and tests.

Side effects of PrEP

Side effects of PrEP pills may include:



Diarrhea



Headaches



Tiredness



Upset stomach

For PrEP shots, pain at the injection site is also common.



These side effects usually go away over time.

How well does PrEP work?

PrEP can lower the risk of getting HIV from sex by about 99% when taken as prescribed.

PrEP pills lower the risk of getting HIV from injection drug use by at least 74% when taken as prescribed.



What is PEP?

PEP stands for post-exposure prophylaxis. It is a course of HIV medicines you take for 28 days to prevent HIV infection after possible exposure.

PEP must be started within 72 hours of possible exposure to be effective. The sooner you can start PEP, the better

Who should use PEP?

You can use PEP if you don't have HIV, or don't know your HIV status, and may have been exposed in the last 72 hours (three days).

This includes people who:

- May have been exposed during sex
- Shared needles or other items to inject drugs
- Were sexually assaulted
- May have been exposed at work
- Had any other possible exposure (like an accidental needle stick)

How to use PEP

PEP is meant for emergency use only and isn't meant to replace other HIV prevention methods like condoms and PrEP.

If you think you've been exposed to HIV in the last 72 hours, talk to your clinician or visit an urgent care or emergency room right away. The sooner you start PEP, the better.



In many states, pharmacists can prescribe PEP.

Side effects of PEP

PEP side effects are similar to those caused by PrEP and may include:



Diarrhea



Headaches



Tiredness

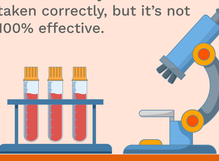


Upset stomach



How well does PEP work?

PEP works very well when taken correctly, but it's not 100% effective.



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