

# PrEP and your Girlfriend

## HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY GIRLFRIEND TO TAKE PrEP?

You can support her by reminding her to take her pills every day. Help her plan for transport and time away to attend her follow-up appointments. You can talk with her about how she will remember to take PrEP or to go for follow-up appointments and how to continue PrEP if she's away from home. Encourage her to continue by telling her how great she's doing with it.

## MY GIRLFRIEND IS EXPERIENCING SIDE EFFECTS AND WANTS TO STOP. WHAT MUST I DO?

Remind her that some people feel side effects for a few weeks after they start while their body is adjusting to the medicine. You can suggest that she takes PrEP before bedtime. If symptoms are severe or do not go away, she must talk to a health care provider for support.

## IF MY GIRLFRIEND IS ON PrEP, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR OUR RELATIONSHIP?

Choosing PrEP helps keep you and your girlfriend HIV free. Using PrEP is a sign that you care about your relationship. With PrEP, you both know you're taking care of each other so that you'll have a long, healthy future together.

## CAN MY GIRLFRIEND FALL PREGNANT WHILE ON PrEP?

Yes, PrEP doesn't prevent pregnancy. You'll need to use a condom or other contraceptive to avoid an unintended pregnancy.

## MY GIRLFRIEND IS PREGNANT. CAN SHE STILL TAKE PrEP?

Yes, many studies have determined that PrEP is very safe for those using PrEP and unborn babies. In fact, PrEP protects a pregnant or breastfeeding woman and her baby.

If you have any questions or want to learn more about PrEP, speak to a health care professional at your nearest health care facility or visit our Facebook page.



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# I choose to be supportive



#PrEP.  
For You.  
For Me.

## WHAT IS PrEP?

PrEP stands for "pre-exposure prophylaxis." PrEP is a small pill that helps HIV negative people stay HIV negative. PrEP can be taken at any time of day, with food or without food.

## HOW DOES PrEP WORK?

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.

## DOES PrEP REALLY WORK?

Taking PrEP as directed lowers your risk of HIV by more than 90%.

## HOW LONG DOES PrEP TAKE TO WORK?

It takes about 7 days for anal sex and 21 days for receptive vaginal sex for PrEP to achieve protection levels.

## CAN I TAKE PrEP?

You can take PrEP if you feel you are at risk of getting HIV and you are HIV negative. Talk with your health care provider to determine if PrEP is right for you.

## IS PrEP SAFE FOR ME?

PrEP is very safe, with no side effects for 90% of users. About 10% of the people who start PrEP will have short-term, mild side effects including softer/more frequent stools, nausea, decreased appetite, abdominal bloating/cramping or flatulence. Dizziness or headaches have also been experienced. These side effects usually fade during the first month of taking PrEP. Tell your health care provider if any of these symptoms are severe or do not go away.

## HOW CAN I GET PrEP?

PrEP is available for free at any government clinic after an HIV test. A health care provider will talk with you about PrEP to decide if it's right for you.

## DO I NEED TO TAKE PrEP EVERY DAY, FOR LIFE?

PrEP is not taken for life – it is only taken for periods of weeks, months, or a few years when a person feels at risk of HIV.

## IF I WANT TO STOP, WHAT MUST I DO?

Talk to a health care provider. You will continue taking PrEP for 28 days after the last time you may have been exposed to HIV in order to ensure you are protected. When you feel you need PrEP again, simply go to a clinic, get an HIV test and tell the health care provider you'd like to start PrEP again.



## CAN I TAKE PrEP WITH ALCOHOL OR OTHER MEDICATIONS?

PrEP can be taken with alcohol, although excess alcohol can be harmful to health and make people forget to take the PrEP pill. You can take PrEP if you are taking other medications. PrEP will not affect other medications.

## IS PrEP THE ONLY PROTECTION I 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.

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.

## PrEP VS. PEP – WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

PrEP is taken before you might be exposed to HIV. PEP, on the other hand, stands for post-exposure prophylaxis. PEP is taken within 72 hours after you might have been exposed to HIV.

## IS PrEP THE SAME AS ART?

No. PrEP consists of some of the same kinds of medicine as ART, but PrEP protects your CD4 cells from the HIV virus if it enters your body. ART is used by people living with HIV in order to reduce the amount of HIV in their body and to keep their body strong to fight off other infections.