



A USER'S GUIDE TO



PrEP



NYC
Health



PrEP

**Enjoy sex with
one less worry.
PrEP can keep
you HIV-negative.**

PrEP

Introducing PrEP

- PrEP is a safe, **daily pill** that greatly reduces your risk of HIV infection.
- Your PrEP medication is called Truvada®. Each pill contains two drugs: 300 milligrams of tenofovir (TDF) and 200 milligrams of emtricitabine (FTC).
- PrEP can prevent HIV infection by stopping the virus from spreading in your body if you are exposed.
- PrEP only stops HIV if you have enough medicine in your body, so you need to take it **every day**.

PrEP = Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis
Prophylaxis = Prevention

Take PrEP every day

- Take PrEP **every day**.
- You can take PrEP any time during the day, with or without food.
- PrEP works best if you take it at the same time every day.
 - You may want to take PrEP before or after a daily activity, like when you eat breakfast, or when you brush your teeth before bed.
 - To help you remember, keep your pill bottle where you will see it.
- Set daily reminders to take PrEP on your phone or watch. Text **MEDS** to **877877** to receive texts that remind you when to take your medication.

Store your pills at room temperature – not in the refrigerator, and not someplace warm.

If you forget to take your pill, take it as soon as you remember

- If you usually take your pill in the morning, but realize you forgot to take it that night, take it right away and then take a pill the next morning as usual.
- If you realize you forgot to take a pill, just take one pill and resume your normal schedule. **Do not double the dose to catch up.**
- If you keep missing doses, ask your doctor or nurse about ways to stay on track.

Keep a pill with you

Always carry a pill in a pill box or wrapped in tinfoil. This way, if you miss your routine, you will still have PrEP. Replace the pill every few months so that you don't use it past its expiration date.



Know the side effects

- Most people on PrEP do not report any side effects. For those who do, the most common side effects are nausea, upset stomach, fatigue and headaches. These symptoms often get better or go away within the first month of taking PrEP.
- To prevent nausea, take PrEP with a snack or before bed to make nausea less noticeable.
- To relieve nausea, try ginger candy or peppermint tea.
- For gas or bloating, try an over-the-counter gas reliever.
- If soft stools bother you, try a fiber supplement.
- Speak to your health care provider if side effects continue to bother you.
- Your provider will monitor your lab results for other PrEP-related side effects.

PrEP and Reproductive Health

- PrEP will not interfere with hormonal birth control, including emergency contraception.
- PrEP may be an option if you are trying to get pregnant, while you are pregnant or while breastfeeding. Ask your doctor for more information.
- PrEP is safe to use during menopause.





See the doctor

- Visit your health care provider every three months for refills and checkups, including HIV testing.
- Your provider will ask you:
 - If side effects are bothering you
 - Whether you are taking PrEP every day
 - About your sex life, sexual health and risk for HIV
- Your provider will also test you for other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) at a frequency that is right for you.
- Tell your provider right away if you experience fevers, swollen glands or a rash – these may be signs of an early HIV infection.



PrEP is an effective prevention option for transgender women and will not interfere with hormone therapy.

Don't stop and start

- If you want to stop taking PrEP for any reason, **talk to your health care provider.**
- If you stopped PrEP and want to start again, first see your health care provider and get an HIV test.
- Stopping and starting PrEP can be dangerous. If you become HIV-positive and then start PrEP again, the HIV in your body can become resistant to medication. This may make it harder to treat HIV.

PrEP, condoms and your sexual health

- PrEP helps you stay HIV-negative, even if you do not always use condoms or other barrier methods.
- Condoms **do** protect against other STIs and pregnancy; PrEP does not. Condoms also give you additional protection against HIV, even when you are on PrEP. **To stay healthy, use condoms as much as possible, ideally every time you have sex.**



Five steps to PrEP

1. Take PrEP once a day.
2. If you forget, take it as soon as you remember.
3. Tell your doctor if side effects are bothering you.
4. Visit your doctor for refills and checkups every three months.
5. Don't stop, restart or change how you take PrEP without talking to your doctor.

Questions about PrEP?

For more information, visit nyc.gov and search for **HIV PrEP**.

Text adapted from SPARK, Hunter HIV/AIDS Research Team.