

Are you PrEPared to prevent HIV?

• What is PrEP? •

- Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a medicine to help lower the risk of being infected with HIV.
- It works by blocking the ability of HIV to multiply.
- Taking PrEP lowers the risk of getting HIV from sex by more than 90% and in people who inject drugs by more than 70%.
- Several VA National Formulary options are available:
 - Two combination medicines (Truvada® and Descovy®) are approved for PrEP and are taken by mouth once a day. Both contain emtricitabine and tenofovir in one combination pill.
 - Cabotegravir (Apretude®) is an injectable medicine available as an option for some patients. The injection is given monthly for the first 2 months, then every 2 months.



• Is PrEP right for you? •

- Your health care provider will talk with you about any risk factors you have for getting HIV.
 - Do you have unprotected sex with multiple partners?
 - Is your partner HIV positive or do you not know the HIV status of your partner(s)?
 - Are you a man who has sex with men?
 - Do you inject drugs and share needles or injection equipment?
 - Do you exchange sex for something you need, such as food, shelter, or money?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, you may benefit from PrEP.

• What happens if PrEP is right for me? •

- If you are able to become pregnant and are considering PrEP, you will be offered a pregnancy test.
- Your provider will order an HIV test to find out if you already have HIV. **People who have HIV are not eligible for PrEP** and should see an HIV specialist for treatment.
- Other lab tests will be needed to see if you can safely take PrEP.

• What are the possible side effects from PrEP •

- The most common side effects with **oral PrEP** are nausea and dizziness during the first month.
- The most common side effects with **injectable PrEP** are injection site reactions, such as pain, redness, or swelling.

• What should I expect while taking PrEP? •

- Oral PrEP is considered safe in pregnancy, but you should discuss the risks and benefits with your healthcare provider if you become pregnant or decide to breastfeed.
- When taking PrEP, you will need to have a test for HIV at least every 2-3 months, and other lab tests every 6 months.
- If you have hepatitis B infection, do not stop taking oral PrEP without first talking to your healthcare provider.

• What else can I do to reduce my HIV risk? •

- Use PrEP in combination with other methods to reduce your risk of getting HIV. Even if you decide that PrEP is not right for you, use other ways to reduce your risk of HIV.
 - Know the HIV status of sexual and/or injecting partners.
 - Use barrier methods such as condoms every time you have sex.
 - If you inject drugs, use clean injection equipment, and ask your provider about treatment options.



• How can I find out more information? •

Talk to your health care provider to see if PrEP would help you reduce your risk of getting HIV.

Resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention PrEP
<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/prep.html>
- Medline Plus
<https://medlineplus.gov/hivprepdandpep.html>
- San Francisco City Clinic – Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)
<http://www.sfcityclinic.org/services/prep.asp>
- Veterans Affairs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)
<https://www.hiv.va.gov/products/prep-patient-factsheets.asp>

Contact Information: