



# Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis

## Topics

PrEP Prevention

## Ready, Set, PrEP Program Removes Cost Barrier to Increase Access to PrEP Medications Nationwide [👉](#)

*Ready, Set, PrEP is a new nationwide program that provides PrEP medications at no cost to individuals who qualify. To check eligibility and enroll in the program [click here](#) [👉](#).*

## What is PrEP?

PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis, is an HIV prevention method in which people who don't have HIV take HIV medicine daily to reduce their risk of getting HIV if they are exposed to the virus. PrEP can stop HIV from taking hold and spreading throughout your body. Currently, there are only two FDA-approved medications for PrEP.

PrEP is prescribed to HIV-negative adults and adolescents who are at high risk for getting HIV through sex or injection drug use.

## Why Take PrEP?

PrEP is highly effective when taken as indicated.

The once-daily pill reduces the risk of getting HIV from sex by more than 90%. Among people who inject drugs, it reduces the risk by more than 70%.

Your risk of getting HIV from sex can be even lower if you combine PrEP with condoms and other prevention methods.

## Is PrEP Right for You?

PrEP may benefit you if you are HIV-negative and **ANY** of the following apply to you:

### You are a gay/bisexual man and you:

- have an HIV-positive partner
- have multiple partners, a partner with multiple partners, or a partner whose HIV status is unknown—and you also:
  - have anal sex without a condom, or
  - recently had a sexually transmitted infection (STI)

### You are a heterosexual and you:



- have an HIV-positive partner
- have multiple partners, a partner with multiple partners, or a partner whose HIV status is unknown—and you also:
  - don't always use a condom for sex with people who inject drugs, or
  - don't always use a condom for sex with bisexual men

## You inject drugs and you:

- share needles or equipment to inject drugs
- are at risk for getting HIV from sex

## What Drugs Are Approved for PrEP?

Currently, there are only two medications approved for daily use as PrEP. Both are combinations of two anti-HIV drugs in a single pill:

- Emtricitabine (F) 200 mg in combination with tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) 300 mg (F-TDF; brand name Truvada®) is recommended for all adults and adolescents at risk for HIV through sex or injection drug use.
- Emtricitabine (F) 200 mg in combination with tenofovir alafenamide (TAF) 25 mg (F-TAF; brand name Descovy®) is recommended for adults and adolescents at risk for HIV through sex, excluding people at risk through vaginal sex. Descovy® has not yet been studied for HIV prevention for receptive vaginal sex.

## Is PrEP Safe?

No significant health effects have been seen in people who are HIV-negative and have taken PrEP for up to 5 years.

Some people taking PrEP may have side effects, like nausea, but these side effects are usually not serious and go away over time. If you are taking PrEP, tell your health care provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

And be aware: PrEP protects you against HIV but not against other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or other types of infections. Combining PrEP with condoms will reduce your risk of getting other STIs.

## How Do You Get PrEP?

If you think PrEP may be right for you, visit your doctor or health care provider. PrEP is only available by prescription. Any health care provider licensed to write prescriptions can prescribe PrEP; specialization in infectious diseases or HIV medicine is not required.

If you don't have a doctor, you can use the [HIV Services Locator](#) to find a PrEP provider and other HIV services near you. You can visit many community health centers for a PrEP consultation.

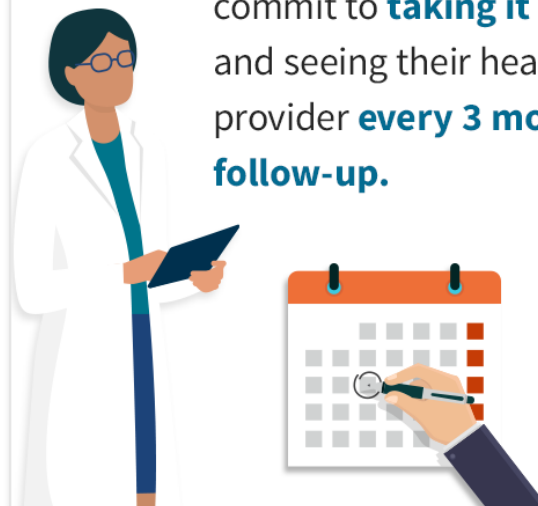
Because PrEP is for people who are HIV-negative, you'll have to get an HIV test before starting PrEP and you may need to get other tests to make sure it's safe for you to use PrEP.

If you take PrEP, you'll need to see your healthcare provider every 3 months for repeat HIV tests, prescription refills, and follow-up.

## How Can You Get Help Paying For PrEP?

### TAKING PrEP TO PREVENT HIV

People who use PrEP must commit to **taking it every day** and seeing their health care provider **every 3 months for follow-up.**



The cost of PrEP is covered by most insurance programs and state Medicaid plans. Several medication assistance programs provide free or reduced cost PrEP to people with limited income or no insurance.

- If you are on Medicaid, check with your benefits counsellor.
- If you have health insurance but can't afford the co-pay, you may receive co-pay assistance from drug manufacturers, [state programs](#), or [patient advocacy foundations](#).
- If you don't have insurance, your healthcare provider can direct you to medication assistance programs that may help pay for PrEP. You can also consider enrolling in an insurance marketplace or Medicaid, if you are eligible. A patient navigator or benefits counsellor at your health clinic or health care provider's office can often help you with this.
- Learn more about available manufacturer-, state-, and foundation-sponsored programs that can help pay for PrEP at [www.PrEPcost.org](http://www.PrEPcost.org).



*If you don't have prescription drug insurance, you may be eligible for Ready, Set, PrEP, a national program that makes PrEP medications available at no cost.*

*To qualify for Ready, Set, PrEP, you must test negative for HIV, have a valid prescription for the medication, and not have prescription drug coverage. All medications are fully covered for qualifying participants; however, the costs of necessary clinic visits and lab tests may vary depending on a person's income.*

*To find out if you qualify, visit [GetYourPrEP.com](http://GetYourPrEP.com) or call toll-free 855-447-8410.*

## Learn More About PrEP

If you think PrEP might be right for you, or you want to learn more visit CDC's [PrEP Basics](#).

Use the [HIV Services Locator](#) to find a PrEP provider and other HIV services near you.

### Topics

[PrEP](#) [Prevention](#)

**Content Source:** [HIV.gov](http://HIV.gov)

**Date last updated:** September 22, 2020

### MORE FROM HIV.GOV




IHS Adds  
HIV  
Prevention  
& STI  
Services in  
an ER to  
Help End  
the HIV  
Epidemic in  
Phoenix >



NIH Study  
Finds Long-  
Acting



Injectable  
Drug  
Prevents  
HIV  
Acquisition  
in Cisgender  
Women >

 Scaling up  
HIV  
Prevention  
Services in >  
STD  
Specialty  
Clinics

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- AIDSinfo – [PrEP Fact Sheet](https://hivinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv/fact-sheets/pre-exposure-prophylaxis-prep)  
(<https://hivinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv/fact-sheets/pre-exposure-prophylaxis-prep>).
- CDC – [PrEP](https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/prep.html)  
(<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/prep.html>).
- CDC – [PrEP Pocket Guide](https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/library/pocket-guides/cdc-hiv-prep-pocket-guide.pdf)  
(<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/library/pocket-guides/cdc-hiv-prep-pocket-guide.pdf>).
- CDC – [PrEP Resources for Consumers and Providers](https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/prep/index.html)  
(<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/prep/index.html>).
- FDA – [Truvada® for PrEP Fact Sheet](https://www.fda.gov/downloads/Drugs/DrugSafety/PostmarketDrugSafetyInformationforPatientsandProviders/UCM312290.pdf)  
(<https://www.fda.gov/downloads/Drugs/DrugSafety/PostmarketDrugSafetyInformationforPatientsandProviders/UCM312290.pdf>).
- FDA – [News release announcing approval of Descovy](https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-approves-second-drug-prevent-hiv-infection-part-ongoing-efforts-end-hiv-epidemic)  
(<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-approves-second-drug-prevent-hiv-infection-part-ongoing-efforts-end-hiv-epidemic>).
- NIH – [PrEP to Reduce HIV Risk](https://www.niaid.nih.gov/diseases-conditions/pre-exposure-prophylaxis-prep)  
(<https://www.niaid.nih.gov/diseases-conditions/pre-exposure-prophylaxis-prep>).
- VA – [HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis](https://www.hiv.va.gov/provider/topics/prep-index.asp)  
(<https://www.hiv.va.gov/provider/topics/prep-index.asp>).



- [VA- PrEP Overview for Patients](https://www.hiv.va.gov/pdf/prep-patient-overview.pdf)  
(<https://www.hiv.va.gov/pdf/prep-patient-overview.pdf>).

