



A USER'S GUIDE TO



PrEP



NYC[™]
Health

PrEP

Introducing PrEP

- 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 **as prescribed**.

A close-up photograph of two men in a library. The man in the foreground is looking at a book, while the man behind him looks on. A pink graphic element is overlaid on the image.

PrEP

**Protect yourself
from HIV every day**

Take PrEP every day

- Take PrEP **as prescribed**.
- 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.
- Consider setting up daily reminders on your phone. Text **CARE** to **877877**, then text **MEDS** (to the same number) 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.

A photograph of two men embracing at night. The man on the left is bald and wearing a light-colored jacket over a maroon shirt. The man on the right has short dark hair and is wearing a dark jacket over a pink shirt with a geometric pattern. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background is a blurred city street at night with warm lights.

PrEP

**Share the night,
*not HIV***

If you forget 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 tin foil. 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 healthcare provider if side effects continue to bother you.
- Your provider will monitor your lab results for other PrEP-related side effects.



See the doctor

- Visit your healthcare provider every three months for refills and check-ups, including HIV testing.
- Your provider will ask you:
 - If side effects are bothering you
 - Whether you are taking PrEP as prescribed
 - About your sex life 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 HIV infection.



Don't stop and start

- If you want to stop taking PrEP for any reason, **talk to your healthcare provider**.
- If you stopped PrEP and want to start again, first see your healthcare provider and get an HIV test.
- Stopping and starting PrEP can be dangerous. If you get infected with HIV 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, but PrEP **does not** protect against other STIs or unplanned pregnancy.
- Condoms **do** protect against other STIs and pregnancy. 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 as prescribed.
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 check-ups 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](https://www.nyc.gov) and search “**HIV PrEP**.”

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

