PEP vs. PrEP

PrEP is different from HIV Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP). PEP is an emergency medication you take for 28 days after exposure to HIV. PEP can help prevent HIV infection, but it must be started within 72 hours of getting exposed to HIV.

For more info about PEP: 1.800.CDC.INFO (1.800.232.4636) or contact CAP at 503.223.5907

PrEP: THE BASICS

PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) is a prevention option that can help you stay HIV-negative. PrEP involves taking a daily HIV medication called Truvada to help block the virus if it gets in the body.

Studies show that PrEP is up to 99% protective against HIV when taken every day. PrEP is another way to reduce your risk for HIV, along with getting tested, talking about status with your partners, and using condoms and lube.

PrEP is a prescription drug and must be prescribed by a medical provider. Currently, Truvada is the only drug approved by the FDA for use as PrEP.

PrEP is covered by state Medicaid programs like OHP and Washington Apple Health. Assistance programs are available to help cover the cost of pharmacy co-pays if you have private insurance. Contact CAP staff at prep@cascadeaids.org for more info.

PrEP does not have to be taken forever. PrEP is meant to be used for times in your life when you are more vulnerable to HIV infection. PrEP can be stopped at any time, under the care of your medical provider.

TESTING SERVICES

We offer free, walk-in HIV and STI testing for our community. Check cascadeaids.org/programs/get-tested for all testing hours and locations.

PRISM HEALTH

Prism Health is CAP’s new LGBTQ+ primary health care center. Prism Health provides primary care, specialized services for the transgender community, testing for HIV and sexually-transmitted infections (STIs), PrEP and PEP, mental health care, & pharmacy services.

Prism Health • prismhealth.org
2236 SE Belmont St., Portland, 97214  503.445.7699

Cascade AIDS Project • cascadeaids.org
520 NW Davis St. Ste. 215, Portland, 97209  503.278.3862
Talking with your provider about PrEP

Is PrEP right for me?

If you are HIV-negative, PrEP may be right if you...

- Have one or more HIV-positive sex or injecting partners.
- Use condoms sometimes, rarely, or never.
- Sometimes or never use condoms with partners at risk for HIV.
- Do sex work.
- Trade sex for money, drugs, or something you need.

PrEP may also be a good option for:

- Gay/bi men and trans people who have had a recent STI diagnosis.
- Women who sometimes or never use condoms with partners who are at risk for HIV, such as a man who has sex with men or a person who injects drugs.
- People who inject drugs who have one or more of the following risk factors: one or more HIV+ injecting partners, live in an area with high rates of HIV infection, share injection equipment (needles, etc.).

What to know before you start...

- Health insurance is an important first step to getting PrEP. Uninsured? Contact CAP to talk with an Insurance Navigator about options.
- To get PrEP, you must test negative for HIV. Your PrEP provider will also test you for syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia; check your hepatitis B immunity; and make sure your kidneys are healthy. Once you’re on PrEP, plan to visit your medical provider every 2-3 months for repeat testing and medication refills.
- One in ten (1/10) people will have side effects when they start PrEP. Upset stomach and headache are the most common, but these side effects often get better or go away within 4 weeks. Share any concerns about side effects with your medical provider.
- PrEP only helps prevent HIV. It doesn’t prevent other STIs or pregnancy. External and internal condoms (condoms you put inside) provide extra protection against HIV, and are an effective way to prevent STIs and pregnancy too.
- PrEP only works when you take it correctly. This means taking the medication every day at about the same time.

Did you know? PrEP takes time to work. It takes 7 days to build up maximum protection for rectal tissue and 20 days to build up maximum protection for vaginal tissue and blood. If you plan to stop PrEP, take it for 28 days after your last potential exposure to HIV.

If you think PrEP may be right for you, here are a few tips for talking with your provider:

- Be clear. Tell your provider you’re interested in PrEP. Bring this pamphlet with you to your appointment to help start the conversation.
- Ask questions. What do you need to know about PrEP to help you make a decision?
- Be upfront. Give your provider the details about your life that could be important to your health, especially your sexual health.
- Share resources. If your provider is unfamiliar with PrEP, direct them to these pages from the CDC:
  - tinyurl.com/h57wc2
  - tinyurl.com/z3nmefu
  Or, have them call the PrEP Support Hotline for Clinicians: 1.855.HIV.PrEP (1.855.448.7737) 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. PST.

If your provider won’t prescribe PrEP for you, don’t give up. Contact CAP staff for assistance finding another provider.