

i-base

Pocket size

PrEP: a UK guide



July 2018

**PrEP protects
you against
HIV even if
you don't use
a condom.**

**This leaflet is
about PrEP.**



**Web links are for
more information.**

PrEP is a single pill that contains two drugs:

1. tenofovir DF (TDF) &
2. emtricitabine (FTC)

Most people take PrEP as a daily pill.

Some people can take PrEP less often.

You and your doctor can talk about different ways that PrEP can be used.

PrEP = pre-exposure prophylaxis

Pre means “before”
– i.e. taking meds
before you have sex
(and also afterwards).

Exposure means a
chance or situation where
your body is exposed to
the risk of catching HIV.

Prophylaxis means a way
of preventing an infection.



Who can use PrEP?

Adult PrEP works whatever your age, gender or sexuality.

- If you do not always use condoms.
- If you had an STI in the last year.
- If you ever use PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis).
- If you use some recreational drugs - especially chemsex (meth, meph or GHB).
- If worrying about HIV stops you having a good sex life.
- If your partner is HIV positive and not on treatment. (*An undetectable viral load has no risk of HIV transmission*).

Getting PrEP in the UK...

Currently, PrEP is only available free on the NHS in Scotland and Wales.

www.prep.scot

[www.friskywales.org/
wales-prep-project.html](http://www.friskywales.org/wales-prep-project.html)

NHS England is providing PrEP for 13,000 people in the IMPACT study.

www.prepimpacttrial.org.uk

There is no NHS access to PrEP in Northern Ireland.

However, many people in the UK buy PrEP online.

Buying PrEP online

Anyone in the UK can buy medicines for personal use from an online pharmacy.

Generic PrEP costs about £35 for 30 tablets.

Generics contain the same active ingredients as brand meds, but cost 90% less.

30 tablets will last one month based on daily dosing but much longer using on-demand dosing.

Make sure PrEP contains both TDF and FTC. Two popular generic makes are:

- Ricovir-EM (by Mylan)
- Tenvir-EM (by Cipla)

UK community websites have lots of information about buying PrEP online:

- iwantprepnow.co.uk
- prepster.info
- i-base.info/guides/prep/buying-prep-online

These websites recommend a few online suppliers where drug testing has confirmed the meds are genuine.



i-base.info/guides/prep

Tests and monitoring

PrEP needs a few important monitoring tests.

1. An HIV test (*4th generation Ab/Ag*). PrEP is only for HIV negative people.

2. STI tests, including hep B.

Regularly checking for other STIs is good practice. It needs to include hep B because the PrEP meds suppress hep B.

3. Kidney tests. Routine kidney monitoring, from blood or urine, is essential to check PrEP is safe for your kidneys.

These tests are free in many NHS sexual health clinics if you say you are using generic PrEP.

Dosing options

PrEP is dosed in two main ways.

1. Daily dosing - taking a single tablet every day works for both vaginal sex and anal sex.

Most PrEP studies used daily dosing. If you are often at risk, ie more than once a week, then daily PrEP might be more effective for you.

If you miss odd doses you will still have very high protection.

Daily PrEP is the only option for women and trans people who want protection from vaginal sex.

Daily PrEP is the only option if you have hepatitis B.

2. On-demand dosing involves only taking PrEP when you are likely to have sex.

This gets good drug levels to anal but not vaginal tissue.

On-demand dosing involves:

- Two tablets up to 24 hours before sex.
- One tablet after sex (24 hours after the first dose)
- One tablet 48 hours after the first dose.

1 & 2

sex

3

4

The “pre” dose is important. It is defined as from about 2 to 24 hours before. TDF takes 24 hours to reach good levels in anal tissue. FTC takes about 30 minutes.

On-demand example

i.e if you think you might have sex on Friday night...

Thursday evening - take TWO tablets (ideally 2 to 24 hours before sex).



1 & 2



Friday - SEX - take ONE tablet on Friday evening.



3

Saturday evening - take ONE final tablet.



4

If you also have sex on Saturday and Sunday, take a single tablet on each of these days. Then take a final PrEP on Monday.



5



6



7

i-base.info/on-demand-dosing

Tips: remembering to take PrEP

Pick the best time to take PrEP and get into a routine.

Keep an adherence diary - mark off each day.

Use a pill box - a simple way to know if you have missed your meds.

Set a repeat alarm on your phone or use an App.

Rough timing is okay - even a late 'pre' dose provides some protection. For anal sex, four doses every week provides more than 95% protection.



i-base.info/adherence

Side effects & drug resistance

Most people either get no side effects or they are mild. They can occur for the first week or so but then usually stop.

Routine lab monitoring will check for rare side effects that are more serious.

The main risk of drug resistance comes from forgetting to take PrEP, if you then become positive. This was rare in PrEP studies.

Also, PrEP will not work against HIV that is resistant to TDF and FTC. Only a few such cases have been reported since PrEP was approved in 2012.

More info

This leaflet is reduced from a 24-page booklet on PrEP.



i-base.info/guides/PrEP

The full booklet has more info on how to use PrEP, monitoring, buying PrEP online, dosing options, stopping PrEP and other questions.

Also on PrEP and women and for transgender people.

Information is all online or we can post you a free print copy.



i-base.info/order

i-Base, 107 The Maltings, London, SE1 3LJ.

More pages >>>

**So long as
you take
PrEP it is
much more
than 99%
effective.**

**PrEP can help
you enjoy 
without worrying
about HIV.**