

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP): Resources for Patients



What is PrEP?

+ Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is a category of medications taken daily by mouth that can reduce the risk of being infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

- Think of PrEP like birth control, but instead of pregnancy prevention, it is for prevention of acquiring HIV.
- Taking PrEP daily is important, as the risk of getting HIV still exists if PrEP is not taken regularly. When taken as prescribed, it is about:
 - 99% effective in preventing HIV transmission through sex for men who have sex with men (MSM)
 - 90% effective in preventing HIV transmission through sex for cisgender women
 - 74% effective in preventing HIV transmission through needles.
- Truvada and Descovy are currently the only two FDA approved options for PrEP.

+ PrEP is generally safe, but some side effects may include nausea that improves with continued use.

- For most people, Truvada is typically recommended over Descovy. Rare side effects include reversible bone loss or kidney disease.
- If you have a history of bone or kidney disease, Descovy is recommended over Truvada.
 - Descovy has only been approved for men who have sex (MSM) with men and transgender women, NOT for heterosexual individuals, those who use IV drugs, or persons who have receptive vaginal sex.

+ For your safety, you will need laboratory monitoring while taking PrEP

- Before treatment, your provider will test for HIV, Hepatitis, other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), pregnancy and kidney function
- You should get tested for HIV every 3 months and for kidney function every 6 months.
- You should also frequently test for pregnancy, if applicable, and other STIs (syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia).

More 

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Is PrEP right for you?

+ PrEP serves as a risk reduction tool for those who may have a higher risk of acquiring HIV, including:

- Those who use IV drugs, MSM, transgender and heterosexual individuals who engage in unprotected sex.

+ PrEP does NOT prevent against non-HIV STIs

- Following safer sex practices and other harm reduction strategies, getting tested for HIV, knowing your partners' HIV status, and avoiding needle sharing are always recommended to lower your risk of unwanted pregnancies, HIV infection, and other STIs.

+ If you are currently HIV negative and have been potentially been exposed to HIV within the past 72 hours, ask your provider for a Post-Exposure Prophylaxis immediately (reference *PEP: Resources for Providers*).

+ Always consult with your medical provider on the best treatment options that are right for you.



How can you access and afford PrEP?

+ The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services provides PrEP at no cost through a nationwide Ready, Set, PrEP program (<https://tinyurl.com/RSPrEP>).

- CDPHE compiled has a list of PrEP providers to assist you in finding a healthcare provider (<https://tinyurl.com/findpro>) in Colorado as well as published information on financial assistance available through State Drug Assistance Program (<https://tinyurl.com/ColoradoAssistance>) and Public Health Intervention Program (<https://tinyurl.com/PHIProgram>)
- Whether you are insured, uninsured or underinsured, Gilead's Advancing Access (<https://tinyurl.com/GileadAccess>) program can help you afford Truvada or Descovy for PrEP as well.

+ While using PrEP, frequent HIV/STI testing is essential, so it is important to find a convenient and affordable testing center.

- Denver Public Health has created a comprehensive list of HIV/STI testing locations (<https://tinyurl.com/TestingLoc>) and associated costs.
- It Takes a Village (<https://tinyurl.com/TakesVillage>) also provides free HIV/STI testing and counseling, specifically for people of color living in the Denver Metro area.
- The Colorado Health Network (CHN) (<https://tinyurl.com/CoHealthNet>) is Colorado's oldest and largest source of statewide services and programs for people living with HIV or impacted by HIV. They provide HIV/STI testing as well as access to PrEP & PEP.
- The IDGP Clinic at University Hospital also offers free PrEP HIV/STI testing home lab kits through their telemedicine program (<http://www.idgp.org/TelePrEP>) for anyone in Colorado