

## PrEP

Also known as pre exposure prophylaxis

PrEP is medication used to prevent HIV.

### QUICK FACTS

- PrEP is suitable for you if you are at high risk of HIV infection
- PrEP is highly-effective in preventing HIV when taken consistently every day or on-demand under the advice of your doctor
- PrEP can be prescribed by any GP
- You need to have regular appointments with your doctor once you start PrEP

### What is this?

PrEP is a tablet that is taken by people who are at risk of HIV. PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV by up to 99%.

PrEP is suitable for you if you are at high risk of HIV infection. For example:

- if you are a man who has sex with men without using a condom
- if you have a sexual partner who has HIV infection and is not on treatment, or is at high risk of getting HIV

Watch [10 things you need to know about PrEP](#) for an overview of PrEP.

### Is PrEP covered under Medicare?

Yes, it is. Several fixed dose-combination medicines that contain tenofovir disoproxil are currently listed on the Medicare Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for use as PrEP for people with a valid Medicare card in Australia.

If you have a Medicare card and a valid prescription, this means that PrEP medication can be purchased for a discounted rate at retail pharmacies in Australia.

If you do not have a Medicare card, check [PAN](#) for information about access to PrEP, including buying PrEP medication online.

### Is PrEP effective?

PrEP is highly-effective in preventing HIV when taken consistently every day or on-demand under the advice of your doctor.

### Is PrEP safe? What are the side effects?

Some people experience side effects such as nausea, loss of appetite and headaches. These side effects are usually mild and disappear within the first month.- If you are concerned about side effects which are not going away, see your doctor.-

A small proportion of people taking PrEP may develop kidney damage, so it is very important that you have kidney tests every three months when you are taking PrEP.

## How do I get PrEP?

PrEP can be prescribed by any GP. You can find a-prescribing doctor in your area on [PAN](#).-

If you are likely to benefit from taking PrEP, your doctor will organise blood tests to assess your kidney and liver function, in addition to an HIV test.

Once you have met the eligibility criteria and want to start PrEP, your doctor can write you a script. If you have a Medicare card, PrEP medication can be purchased for a discounted rate at retail pharmacies in Australia. However, some pharmacies may need to order the medication, which may take a few days.

Find out more about how and where to get PrEP at:

- [PAN](#)
- [Alfred Health: Victorian PrEP Service](#)

## What happens once I start PrEP?

You need to have regular appointments with your doctor once you start PrEP.

You will need to have blood tests for HIV and other tests to see if your body is reacting well to the medication. You will also receive information about how to reduce the risk of acquiring HIV.

You should take your medication every day as prescribed, and your doctor will advise you about ways to help you remember to take it regularly.

Tell your doctor if you are having trouble remembering to take your medication or if you want to stop PrEP.

Find out the different ways you can take PrEP at [PAN: How To take PrEP](#).

## Does PrEP protect me from other STIs?

No, PrEP does not protect you against other STIs like-syphilis or gonorrhoea.

If you have started taking PrEP, it is important for you to have regular STI check-ups even if you have no symptoms.

## How long do I need to be on PrEP?

You should discuss this with your doctor.

There are several reasons that people stop taking PrEP:

- If your risk of getting HIV infections becomes low because of changes that occur in your life, you may want to stop taking PrEP.
- If you find that you don't want to take medication every day or often forget to take your medication, other ways of protecting yourself from HIV infection may work better for you.

- If you have side effects from the medication that are interfering with your life, you may want to stop taking PrEP.
- If blood tests show that your body is reacting to PrEP in unsafe ways, your doctor may have to stop prescribing PrEP for you.

## Are there any alternatives to PrEP?

Depending on your risk factors, you may be more suitable for other HIV prevention methods like PEP or other safe sex strategies.

## Where can I get help?

- Visit a [sexual health service near you](#)
- Visit your local doctor
- Visit your local community health centre

### DISCLAIMER

This fact sheet provides general sexual health information and is not intended to replace the need for a consultation with your doctor.

If you have concerns about your health, you should seek advice from your doctor.

If you require urgent care, you should go to your nearest Emergency Department or call [000](#).