



1. What is the difference between PrEP and PEP?

PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) is meant to be used before a possible HIV exposure, while PEP (Post Exposure Prophylaxis) is meant to be used within 72 hours of an HIV exposure. PEP is time-sensitive, so you must see a provider urgently if you think you have been exposed to HIV! PrEP and PEP are not just used before and after sex, but can also be used by people who use substances. **We offer both PrEP and PEP in all our sexual health clinics.**



2. How does PrEP work?

PrEP stops HIV from infecting a person's body. Think of it like a shield that protects your white blood cells from being infected.

3. Is PrEP an effective medication to take to minimize my risk for HIV?

Yes! PrEP decreases the risk of you getting HIV by 99%.



4. What are some factors that may make me ineligible for PrEP?

Common reasons why you might not be able to get PrEP include: if you have ever had an allergic reaction to the medications, if you have liver or kidney problems, if your immune system is weakened, if you are HIV+, or if you have hepatitis. If you have questions about your eligibility, please speak to your health care provider.

5. What should I do if I forget to take my PrEP pill?

If you miss a dose, it is recommended that you take the dose as soon as you remember it, unless it is almost time for your next dose. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and continue with your regular schedule. Never take more than one dose of a PrEP pill within a 24-hour period of time.



6. I was recently prescribed a new medication, will this affect my current PrEP prescription?

Always inform your health care provider of any new medications that you are taking to ensure there are no interactions between the medications.

7. How can I schedule a visit to receive PrEP/PEP?

Our Sexual Health Clinic locations can be found at this link: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/clinics>. To set up a visit, please call the clinic that is closest to you.



8. Who can I talk to about PrEP/PEP?

You can speak to one of our health care providers by visiting one of our Sexual Health Clinics: <https://ph.lacounty.gov/clinics>. Our providers will start you on PrEP and PEP. Once started on one of these medications, you will be connected with a PrEP navigator. Our navigators have extensive knowledge with PrEP and PEP and will be able to assist you. If you are already enrolled in our TelePrEP program, speak with your navigator for next steps and any further questions!

9. What is the TelePrEP program?

The TelePrEP program is an HIV prevention program offered by the Department of Public Health Sexual Health Clinics. Once enrolled in this program, you will be paired with a PrEP navigator who helps you schedule your appointments and is available to answer any questions you may have. You will have your health care provider visits over the phone or video and will go into clinic only for your HIV and STD tests. Medications will either be mailed to you or prescribed to a pharmacy near your home. This program saves you time!



10. What is a PrEP Center of Excellence?

PrEP Centers of Excellence are various locations located in Los Angeles County where you can receive assistance with PrEP/PEP medications, as well as get clarification about whether it is right for you. Each location has a navigator ready to speak with you whenever you have questions! A complete list of Centers of Excellence can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/yc69yc55>.





11. How are services covered?

If you are insured, we will bill your insurance. Please note we do not charge a co-pay for our services, and you will never receive a bill from us or your insurance company for the services you receive in clinics. If you are uninsured and eligible for Medi-Cal, our PrEP navigators will assist you in locating a Medi-Cal enrollment site. If uninsured and not eligible for Medi-Cal, we will provide the services free of charge. No LA county resident will be turned away for services in our clinics due to being uninsured.



12. What are potential side effects of taking PrEP?

Each PrEP medication is different. Common side effects for PrEP pills include stomach problems such as nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite. For the injectable PrEP, the most common side effect is pain at the injection site (buttock), which goes away with time. If you should experience unbearable or persistent side effects, consult with a provider to determine the next steps.



13. My partner has HIV; am I at risk for contracting HIV if we are sexually active?

If your partner has been undetectable for a period of 6 months or longer and has been consistently taking HIV medication, there is little to no risk of HIV transmission. Research studies have shown that people who take their medications as prescribed become undetectable, meaning that they have so little HIV in their blood that it cannot be detected on lab tests, and undetectable people cannot transmit the virus to others. Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U). Additional steps to minimize HIV exposure include taking PrEP, taking PEP after an HIV exposure, using condoms when having sex, choosing sexual activities with low risk of HIV transmission (oral sex), and getting tested regularly for STDs, as STDs can increase the risk of HIV transmission.



14. I've been on PrEP for a while and want to stop taking it. What should I do?

Schedule an appointment with your healthcare provider to discuss. During the appointment, talk openly with your provider about why you would like to discontinue the medication. They may ask questions about your current sexual and substance use activity to help them decide if you should keep taking the medication. Our providers are here to support you as you make the best decision for yourself.



15. Will PrEP affect my ability to have a child?

No! Also, if you want to take PrEP so that you can have a child with someone who has HIV, it won't affect your ability to get pregnant. Talk to one of our providers if you are planning to become pregnant while on PrEP.

16. Are there long-term effects of PrEP on my liver?

Although rare (occurring in 5% or less of people on PrEP), Truvada and Apretude can cause liver injury. It is more likely to occur in those who have a history of hepatitis or other liver disease. The liver injury caused by these medications is usually reversible after the medication is stopped, so not a long-term effect. Our providers monitor your liver function by completing a blood test called the 'liver function test' or LFT.



17. Are there any long-term effects of PrEP on my kidneys?

Although rare (occurring in less than 1% of people on PrEP), Truvada can cause a decrease in kidney function that requires the medication to be stopped. This decrease in kidney function is usually reversible after the medication is stopped, so not a long-term effect. This is more common in patients with a history of high blood pressure, diabetes, and chronic kidney disease, as well as patients over the age of 50. Our providers monitor your kidney function by completing a blood test called a 'creatinine.'

18. Are there any long-term effects of PrEP on my bones? I heard that if I take this medicine, I might develop a hunchback. Is that true?

While Truvada can cause a small decrease in bone strength, the decrease has never been shown to cause a person's bones to become so weak that they break. The small decrease in bone strength is also reversible when the medication is stopped, so there are no known long-term effects. These medications do not cause a hunchback or bone deformities.

