

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Fact Sheet for Nurses August 2012

What is PrEP?

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is the use of antiretroviral medications (ARVs) to reduce the risk of HIV infection via sexual exposure.

PrEP is a new HIV prevention method in which people who do not have HIV take a daily pill to reduce their risk of becoming infected. When used consistently, PrEP has been shown to be effective in men who have sex with men (MSM) and heterosexually-active men and women.

In July 2012, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the combination medication tenofovir disoproxil fumarate plus emtricitabine (TDF/FTC) for use as PrEP among sexually active adults at risk for HIV infection. TDF/FTC is known as Truvada and is made by Gilead Sciences.

Is PrEP Effective?

Research has demonstrated HIV prevention benefits of PrEP for reducing the risk of acquiring HIV sexually. When used consistently and appropriately, PrEP has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV infection among adults at very high risk for HIV infection through sex, including men who have sex with men and heterosexually-active men and women.

In November 2010, the multinational iPrEx study showed that a once-daily pill was safe and provided an average of 44 percent additional protection against HIV infection among men who have sex with men who were also provided with a comprehensive package of prevention services, including condoms, monthly HIV testing, counseling to reduce risk behavior, encouragement of adherence to the daily regimen and management of other sexually transmitted infections. The level of protection depended on adherence – of the MSM with detectable levels of medication in their blood, the risk of HIV acquisition was reduced by more than 90 percent.

In July 2011, results from two PrEP studies demonstrated the efficacy and safety of PrEP among heterosexually-active men and women. One study found that a once-daily TDF/FTC tablet reduced the risk of HIV infection by roughly 62 percent in heterosexually-active men and women. As with iPrEx, these results showed that the level of protection offered by PrEP is strongly correlated to the level of adherence to the daily medication doses.

Who Should Take PrEP?

PrEP is not for everyone. It is an intensive prevention approach that requires strict adherence to daily medication and routine HIV testing. PrEP is recommended only for HIV-negative individuals who are at ongoing very high risk for sexual exposure to HIV.

The CDC has released detailed Interim Guidance for clinicians for use of PrEP with MSM and with heterosexuals.

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Key Takeaways from PrEP Trials

- While no significant side effects were observed in the trials, the most common side effects were mild nausea and alteration in kidney function.
- Individuals opting to use PrEP must still use condoms during sex. Condoms remain the most effective HIV prevention method and PrEP is not a substitution for wearing a condom or other safe sex practices. PrEP does not prevent against other sexually transmitted infections.
- PrEP is only for individuals who do not have HIV infection.
- PrEP has not been shown to lead to increases in risk behavior.
- PrEP is intended for use in combination with other HIV prevention methods.

CDC Interim Guidance on PrEP Use for Clinicians

Among MSM

- CDC published guidance in January 2011 that stresses the importance of:
 - Targeting PrEP to MSM at very high risk for HIV acquisition;
 - Using PrEP in combination with a comprehensive set of prevention services;
 - Offering counseling regarding risk reduction and the importance of adherence;
 - Confirming that MSM who are prescribed PrEP are confirmed to be HIV negative prior to use;
 - Provide regular and ongoing HIV testing;
 - Regularly monitoring side effects, adherence and risk behaviors.

Among Heterosexually-Active Adults

- CDC published guidance in July 2012 that stresses the importance of:
 - Targeting PrEP to heterosexually active men and women at very high risk for HIV acquisition;
 - Using PrEP in combination with a comprehensive set of prevention services;
 - Offering counseling regarding risk reduction and the importance of adherence;
 - Confirming that heterosexually active men and women who are prescribed PrEP are confirmed to be HIV negative prior to use;
 - Provide regular and ongoing HIV testing;
 - Regularly monitoring side effects, adherence and risk behaviors.
 - Determining whether a woman plans to become pregnant, is currently pregnant, or is breastfeeding;

Additional Resources for Clinicians

- [CDC 's Interim Guidance for Clinicians Considering the Use of Preexposure Prophylaxis for the Prevention of HIV Infection in Men Who Have Sex with Men](#)
- [CDC 's Interim Guidance for Clinicians Considering the Use of Preexposure Prophylaxis for the Prevention of HIV Infection in Heterosexually Active Adults](#)

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- [World Health Organization: Guidance on oral pre-exposure prophylaxis \(PrEP\) for serodiscordant couples, men and transgender women who have sex with men at high risk of HIV](#)
- [AVAC: Global Advocacy for HIV Prevention](#)
- [Truvada Co-Pay Patient Assistance Program](#)