

What is PEP?

PEP (*Post-Exposure Prophylaxis*) is a medication that is taken every day for a month after a potential exposure to HIV.

The PEP medications are the same medications that HIV-positive people use as HIV treatment.



The sooner someone starts PEP the better. It is most effective when started within 24 hours, but it must be started within 72 hours after a possible exposure to HIV.

When do I need PEP?

The most common reasons for needing PEP are:



Sex without a condom



Condom breaking or slipping off during sex



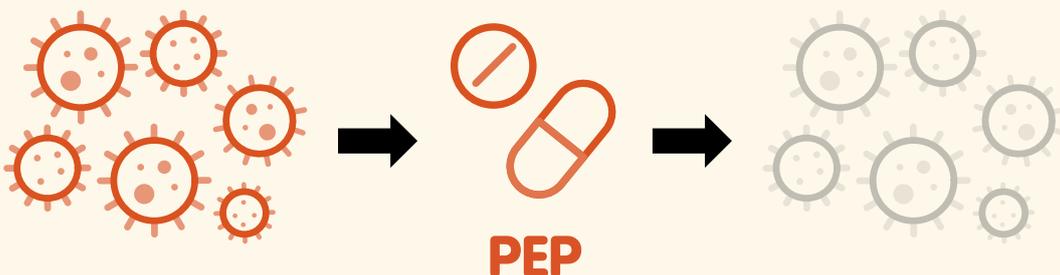
Sharing needles or syringes

PEP is not PrEP.

PrEP (*Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis*) is a medication that HIV-negative people can take to prevent HIV before exposure. For more information about PrEP, check out the **PrEP Factsheet**.

How does PEP work?

HIV can take a few days to become established after entering the body. Starting PEP within 72 hours of an exposure to HIV can help stop the virus multiplying. The HIV in the body would then die naturally without producing more HIV to help prevent you from becoming HIV positive.



Where do I get PEP?

PEP is available from the Emergency Department of most public hospitals, sexual health clinics and some other doctors. If the HIV exposure happens after hours, Emergency Departments are often the best place to go to make sure you start PEP as soon as possible.

There may be a small cost when you get your prescription filled.

How do I take PEP?

1

Possible exposure to HIV

2

Start PEP as soon as possible and within 72 hours

3

Take PEP every day for a month

4

Follow-up tests for HIV and other infections

5

Final HIV test 3 months after potential exposure

It's important to take PEP as prescribed **every day for the full month course**. If you do miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. It is better to take the dose a bit late rather than not at all.

Does PEP have side effects?

Most people don't experience any side effects at all. Some people do have mild side effects including, headaches, nausea and upset stomachs. They are generally worse in the first few days of taking PEP and usually get better over time. Side effects will stop as soon as you finish taking your month course of PEP.



If you are worried about the side effects, do not stop taking PEP. Speak with the doctor or nurse who prescribed you PEP. They may be able to change the type of PEP medication so you have less side effects.



More information and where to get PEP:
www.getpep.info



Other factsheets:

- **HIV Testing** Factsheet
- **Treatment as Prevention** Factsheet
- **PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)** Factsheet



Other resources:

- **Us Mob and HIV** Booklet
- **Us Mob and HIV** Website
- **Better to Know** Website
- **Young Deadly Free** Website
- **ATSIHIV** Website
- **Get PEP** Website



Services for information and support:

- State and Territory HIV Services
- Organisations for People Living with HIV
- Positive Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Network (PATSIIN)
- Organisations to find Aboriginal Medical Services
- Anwernekenhe National HIV Alliance
- AFAO