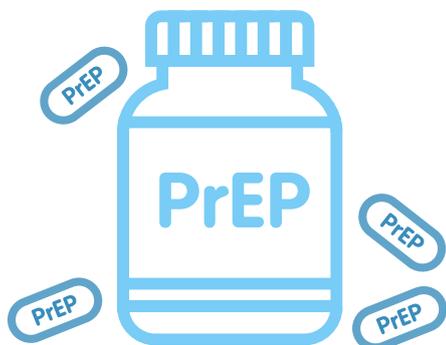


PrEP Factsheet

for Trans and Gender Diverse People

PrEP

afao



What is PrEP?

PrEP stands for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis. PrEP is a pill that HIV negative people can take to prevent HIV. Taking PrEP before being exposed to HIV means there's enough drug in your system to stop HIV if it gets into your body. If PrEP is taken as prescribed it has proved very effective at preventing HIV and reduces the risk of HIV transmission by almost **100%**.



Who is PrEP for?

PrEP is recommended for all people at risk of HIV.

Trans and gender diverse people may be at risk if you:



have had or are likely to have condomless sex (or if the condom breaks or falls off) with casual partners



have had or are likely to have condomless sex (or if the condom breaks or falls off) with a regular HIV positive partner who is not on treatment or is on treatment but has a detectable viral load



use recreational drugs such as crystal (methamphetamine) or GHB (gamma hydroxybutyrate)



have recently had an STI such as anal or vaginal/front-hole gonorrhoea, anal or vaginal/front-hole chlamydia, or syphilis



How to commence starting PrEP?

To commence PrEP you will first need to visit your doctor to get a prescription. Any GP can write a prescription for PrEP. Before taking PrEP, you must be HIV negative, so will need to have an HIV test. Your doctor will also do tests for other STI tests and check your kidney health. Once you commence PrEP, you'll need a full sexual health check every three months when you go back to get your next PrEP prescription and your doctor may also check on your kidney health.

Where can I get PrEP and how much will it cost?

If you are an Australian resident with a Medicare card, once you have your prescription from the doctor, you can get PrEP from your nearest pharmacy as you do with other prescription drugs (although some pharmacies may need to order it in). As with other prescription drugs that are subsidised by the government, when you get PrEP from your pharmacy you will be need to make a payment at the pharmacy.



This is currently **\$30** per script (30 pills) and **\$7.30** for concession card holders.



You can also purchase the drugs from an online overseas pharmacy and legally import them to Australia. The cost will vary, so comparing the prices the different websites charge can be useful.

You can find more information about ordering PrEP from online overseas pharmacies, at **PAN** (www.pan.org.au) and **PrEP'D For Change** (www.prepdforchange.com).

medicare

How can you access PrEP if you do not have a Medicare card?

If you do not have a Medicare card, you have the option of legally importing 3 months worth of PrEP at a time from an online overseas supplier. You will still require a prescription from your doctor before ordering online. **PAN** (www.pan.org.au) and **PrEP'D For Change** (www.prepdforchange.com) provide more information including a list of overseas suppliers where you can purchase PrEP. The cost will vary, so comparing the prices they charge can be useful.



What if I have trouble affording PrEP?

If you cannot afford to buy PrEP, you can apply for assistance on PAN's coupon scheme from anywhere in Australia: www.pan.org.au/assistance-coupons.

There are also additional coupon schemes in some states and territories:

- **Australian Capital Territory:** https://www.meridianact.org.au/accessing_prep_through_the_green_cross_pharmacy_coupon_program
- **Western Australia:** <https://www.mclinic.org.au/prep/coupon>



What side effects are there?

The drugs used for PrEP are safe and well-tolerated. Most people experience no side effects at all. Some people will experience mild side effects such as nausea and headaches when commencing PrEP. These side effects normally disappear within a few days or weeks. Very rarely, PrEP can affect your kidney function.

Your doctor will monitor you for side effects with blood tests for kidney function. There is also a very small effect on bone mineral density, but this goes back to normal after stopping PrEP.



How should I take PrEP?

Australian Guidelines recommend daily PrEP for trans and gender diverse people. This requires taking a pill every day. Daily PrEP needs to be taken for **7 days** before you get full protection. During this first week while taking the pills use other HIV prevention methods such as condoms when having sex. If you want to stop taking daily PrEP, you will need to keep taking one pill daily for **28 days** after the last time you had sex.

Daily PrEP			
DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4
DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7	
			Full protection

How should I start PrEP again after a break?

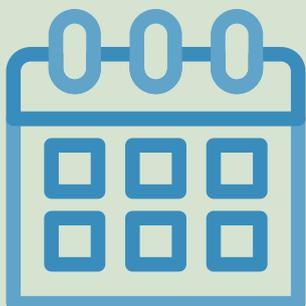
Many people stopped taking PrEP during the COVID-19 pandemic as lockdowns and other restrictions meant they were having less sex. If after a break you are going to start PrEP again, the first thing to consider was when was your last sexual health check. If you have not had one in the last three months you should consider doing so. **You should also check how many pills you have left over, if they have been stored safely, and if you have a current prescription.**

When you start daily PrEP again, remember you need to take PrEP every day for 7 days before you get **full protection**. If you do have sex during that first week, use other HIV prevention methods such as condoms.



Can you take daily PrEP while taking gender-affirming hormones?

If you are taking **gender-affirming hormones**, you can take daily PrEP. Studies have shown taking daily PrEP does not affect hormone levels and nor do the hormones reduce the effectiveness of daily PrEP to prevent HIV infection.



What is on-demand PrEP and can I take it?

On-demand PrEP, or event-based PrEP, is a different way of taking PrEP that involves taking PrEP just before and after someone has sex. It still uses the same drug, but has a different dosing schedule. However, on-demand PrEP is currently only recommended for people presumed male at birth who are not taking gender-affirming hormones, and have not had genital surgery.

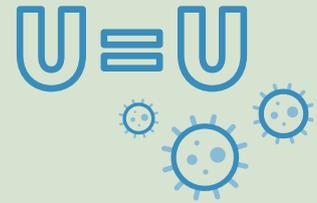
We do not yet have the evidence that on-demand PrEP works in other population groups, such as trans men and non-binary people presumed female at birth, and anyone taking gender-affirming hormones. On-demand PrEP has not been proven to provide the level of protection required for trans men and non-binary people presumed female at birth, even if they are only engaging in anal sex. It has also not been proven to protect people presumed male at birth who are not on hormones who have had a vaginoplasty and engage in receptive vaginal sex.

What about other HIV prevention options?

More than ever before, there are a range of options available to prevent HIV. You can choose an option or combination of options that work best for you. PrEP is one of the options. Other options include:



Condoms when used correctly are effective to prevent HIV and pregnancy, and they help reduce the risk of other STIs (**although they do not eliminate the risk**).



Undetectable viral load is effective to prevent HIV transmission. If a person with HIV is taking treatment and has an undetectable viral load this means they cannot pass on HIV to their partners. This is known as Treatment as Prevention. You might also hear about this described as '**U=U**' which stands for 'Undetectable equals Untransmittable'



Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is available if you think you have been exposed to HIV. This is not the same as PrEP. PEP is a course of drugs taken for one month after a possible exposure to HIV. PEP should be started as soon as possible. It is most effective when started within **24 hours** but must be started within 72 hours of exposure. For more information visit www.getpep.info.

What about other STIs?

PrEP prevents HIV, but not other STIs or pregnancy. Regular sexual health checks are important for all sexually active people. If you are sexually active, you should have regular sex health checks every three months. If you're taking PrEP, these regular STI tests just become part of each visit to your doctor to get your PrEP scripts to ensure that if you have an STI it is diagnosed and treated quickly. STIs can show no symptoms, which is why regular testing is important.

