

HIV PrEP INFORMATION SHEET

WHAT IS PrEP?

- PrEP stands for **HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis**.
- PrEP involves taking medication regularly to lower the chance of HIV infection.
- When taken regularly, PrEP works very well.
- **PrEP does not protect against other sexual infections.**

WHAT MEDICATIONS CAN BE USED?

- 2 combination medications are approved for PrEP in Canada
- Emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg (Truvada) can be used by adults with sexual risks for HIV. It can be used off-label for people who inject drugs.
- Emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 25 mg (Descovy) can be used by adolescents and adults with sexual risks for HIV. It has not been studied for people having receptive vaginal sex.
- These medications work best when 1 tablet is taken daily, with or without food.
- It takes **7 days** for PrEP to be effective for anal sex. It takes **21 days** for PrEP to be effective for vaginal sex.

CAN I TAKE PrEP “ON DEMAND”?

- On-demand PrEP might be an option for gbMSM individuals (gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men).
- On-demand PrEP has not been studied for people who have vaginal sex, or people who inject drugs.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO WHILE TAKING PrEP?

- Blood tests **must** be done every 3 months to test for HIV infection and to check your kidneys.
- You should be tested for other sexually transmitted infections every 3 months.

HOW MUCH DOES PrEP COST?

- Truvada is covered under the Ontario Drug Benefit, and the Trillium Drug Plan.
- Most private drug plans cover Truvada and Descovy.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF PrEP?

- Some people notice nausea, diarrhea, bloating or headaches when they start PrEP. These side effects usually go away on their own.
- Truvada may cause thinning of the bones. Make sure that you are getting calcium (1000 mg per day) and vitamin D (1000 IU per day) from your diet and supplements.
- Tenofovir can cause kidney problems. Your kidneys will be checked with bloodwork every 3 months while you are taking Truvada.
- Descovy can cause cholesterol and blood sugar issues.
- Rarely, people can have an allergic reaction to PrEP. If you have rash, swelling, or difficulty breathing, go to the emergency department for medical care.
- If you get HIV while on PrEP, you will need to stop PrEP and start new treatments for HIV. **If you experience symptoms that could be early HIV, see your doctor right away. Symptoms of early HIV include:** fever, headache, joint pain, sore throat.

WHAT IF I FORGET TO TAKE A DOSE?

- Take the medication as soon as you remember, unless your next dose is due within the next 6 hours. In this case, take your next dose at the usual time and do not double your dose.

WHAT IF I DECIDE TO STOP PrEP?

- Continue PrEP for **AT LEAST 48 HOURS** after your last possible HIV exposure (sex without a condom or shared drug equipment). The Canadian Guidelines recommend continuing PrEP for 28 days after your last possible HIV exposure.
- Follow up with your doctor for HIV testing 4-6 weeks after your last possible HIV exposure.

Version 3. Updated October 27, 2021.