

PEP Information



PEP (Post Exposure Prophylaxis) is 28 days of tablets taken after an HIV exposure to reduce the chance of getting HIV. PEP needs to be started within 72 hours of exposure. The earlier PEP is started the more effective it is.

PEP works by stopping HIV from multiplying in the body. In the first few hours to days after an exposure the amount of HIV in the body is very low. It is during this time that there is an opportunity for PEP to prevent HIV from becoming an established infection.

Side effects may occur for some people (see table over page).

PEP greatly reduces, but does not completely eliminate, the risk of getting HIV, so there is a small chance that taking PEP won't prevent HIV infection.

Symptoms of acute HIV infection, known as seroconversion, generally occur 2-4 weeks after exposure and include tiredness, fever, sore throat, headache, rash, and enlarged lymph nodes, especially in the neck. People can get these symptoms for a wide range of reasons, for example a simple cold or sinus infection, so having these symptoms may not mean you are getting HIV. If you are concerned see your doctor.

HIV testing is recommended at 2 time points after starting PEP. A test at **6 weeks** can detect early HIV infection. If the test is positive, early detection has the benefit of being able to start HIV treatment as soon after infection as possible. A negative test result at 6 weeks does not completely rule out the possibility of becoming infected with HIV as you will still be in the window period. A test at **12 weeks** covers the window period. If this test is negative, your PEP follow-up is complete. If you have had other exposures in the previous 12 weeks, test again.

If you have another exposure while you are taking PEP it is recommended that you go back to your doctor to discuss this as you will need to extend the PEP course.

Sexual Assault Counselling Services

If you have any concerns regarding a sexual assault, rape or other unwanted sexual experience and would like to speak with a counsellor, the services below specialise in counselling in this area.

CASA House Counselling & Support Line: 9635 3610 www.casahouse.com.au

The **Victorian AIDS Council** provides counselling for members of the LGBTIQ community.

See <https://vac.org.au/lgbti-health/counselling> for more information, or call 9865 6700

PEP Phone line 1800 889 887

PEP Website www.getpep.info

Victorian AIDS Council 9865 6700

Melbourne Sexual Health Centre 9341 6200

CALL 1800 889 887 Victorian NPEP Service

Part of **AlfredHealth**

PEP Medication

Drug Name	Image	Dosage	Side effects
Tenofovir EMT (Tenofovir disoproxil phosphate 291mg/ Emtricitabine 200mg)		1 tablet once a day with food	Common - Nausea, stomach upset, headache, dizziness, weakness, fatigue Rare – kidney problems, bone thinning (when taken long term)
Dolutegravir 50mg (Given in addition to Tenofovir EMT when required)		1 tablet once a day with or without food	Common - Nausea, headache, diarrhoea Rare – Liver inflammation, rash, allergic reaction

Most people are prescribed a 2 drug combination (tenofovir/emtricitabine combined into a single tablet). Some people may be prescribed a third drug (Dolutegravir).

Contact your doctor immediately if you experience a rash soon after starting PEP that you can not attribute to any other cause

Go to your nearest hospital accident and emergency department if you are experiencing

- **Allergic Reaction**—(skin rash/hives accompanied by fever, itching, swelling of eyes/mouth)
- **Liver inflammation** (yellowing of the skin/eyes, dark urine, pale stools, aching under the right ribs)

STARTING PrEP after PEP

PrEP (Pre Exposure Prophylaxis) is taken **before** an HIV exposure. It is taken on an ongoing, daily basis, for as long as it is needed. PrEP is similar to PEP, except that you don't wait until after you may have been exposed to HIV to start it. You take it every day, without stopping. Taking daily PrEP reduces your risk of getting HIV to almost zero.

If you are likely to have ongoing sexual exposures, it is better to start PrEP as soon as you finish your PEP, without missing any days.

Any GP can prescribe PrEP If you prefer to see a doctor with PrEP experience the PEP nurses can help you with this.

You will need an HIV test close to the end of your course of PEP, just before starting PrEP. You must have an HIV test every 3 months while you are on PrEP.

You will have had some tests done when you started PEP. We can send you a copy of these for your GP.

Please talk to the PEP nurses if you want to go on PrEP, and need more information and/or a copy of your results.

PEP Nurse: 1800 889 887 (Mon-Fri 9-5, excluding Public Holidays)

Watch the video "10 Things You Need to Know About PrEP" on www.alfredhealth.org.au/services/victorian-prep-service

See www.pan.org.au or prepdforchange.com for more information on getting PrEP

See www.ashm.org.au/HIV/PrEP/faq/ For information for your GP