



The PrEP Program at Strawberry Mansion Health Center | Health Center 12

What is PrEP?

Pre = Before

Exposure = Coming into contact with

Prophylaxis = Something that prevents infection



Pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, is a new way to lower your risk of HIV infection by taking the daily medication called Truvada. When used as directed, Truvada is 92% effective against HIV.

Truvada works to prevent HIV infection by building up a constant level of drug in the body. This level is reached at different times in different parts of the body. Drug levels in the blood stabilize within about three weeks of starting PrEP.

Like birth control, PrEP only works when you stick with it. To stay protected, it is important to take your medication every day and not just when you think you might be exposed to HIV. Just as missing birth control pills lowers their effectiveness against pregnancy, missing doses of PrEP makes Truvada less effective against HIV infection.

PrEP + condoms = better protection

Truvada does not prevent pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) besides HIV — some of which are also incurable. For the best, most comprehensive protection, condoms are still recommended for people taking PrEP.



Who should take PrEP?

Any HIV-negative adult (18+) at risk of getting HIV is a candidate for PrEP. You may wish to consider PrEP if you:

- » Sometimes, rarely, or never use a condom
- » Have recently been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- » Have an ongoing sexual relationship with someone who is HIV-positive
- » Are having sex with multiple partners or with someone whose HIV status you do not know
- » Have recently injected drugs not prescribed by a doctor
- » Want to conceive safely with an HIV-positive partner

If you are currently living with HIV, consider talking to your HIV-negative partner(s) about PrEP. Some people find it useful to mention PrEP when disclosing their HIV status to a partner for the first time.

Safety and Side Effects

The Food and Drug Administration approved Truvada for HIV prevention in 2012. The same medication has been widely used since 2004 as an HIV treatment. That means scientists have had over ten years to learn about its safety. Side effects are usually mild, such as having an upset stomach or a reduced appetite, and tend to disappear within a few weeks of starting PrEP.



Very rarely, Truvada can also affect kidney function. Regular check-ups while you're on PrEP ensure that any changes in kidney function will be caught and treated early. If you are considering PrEP, be sure to talk to your medical provider about the potential benefits and side effects for you.

How much will it cost?

PrEP is fully covered by most insurance plans, including Medicaid. If you don't have insurance, you will still be able to receive PrEP at no cost as long as you reside in Philadelphia. There is a sliding scale co-pay of \$5-20 for each visit with the doctor.

Questions? Contact us:

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*It's about health. It's about well-being. It's about you. Are you **PrEP**ared? Contact us today.*