



# HVERFORD COLLEGE

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## **Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis against HIV Infection (PrEP)**

There is an exciting new development in HIV prevention that puts another tool in the hands of HIV-negative people. It's called pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and we think students should know about it! Use this document to learn more about PrEP, figure out whether this HIV prevention strategy may be useful for you, and understand what to expect in order to get started during your first visit.

### **What is PrEP?**

PrEP is an HIV prevention strategy in which HIV-negative people take anti-HIV medication before coming into contact with HIV to reduce their risk of becoming infected. PrEP protects against HIV infection much like a malaria pill protects against malaria or a birth control pill protects against pregnancy.

PrEP is different from post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). PEP is taken within 72 hours after HIV exposure and involves a month-long course of anti-HIV medications. If PrEP protects against HIV infection like the birth control pill for pregnancy, think of PEP like the morning-after pill. PrEP does not protect against other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or pregnancy and is not a cure for HIV.

### **Who Should Consider PrEP?**

If you are HIV negative and can answer “yes” to any of the questions below, PrEP might be an HIV prevention strategy to consider:

- Are you a male that has sex with men?
- Do you use condoms sometimes or not at all?
- Have you had a STI in the past 6 months?
- Do you bottom?
- Have you taken post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) in the past year?
- Are you in a relationship with an HIV-positive partner?
- Are you having anal and/or vaginal sex with more than one partner and use condoms sometimes or not at all?
- Are you having sex with someone/people whose HIV status you don't know?
- Are you potentially exposed to HIV through injection drug use?
- Have you used stimulants, poppers, cocaine, meth, ecstasy, or GHB in the last 3–6 months?

## **What Does Starting PrEP Involve? What Should I Expect During My First Visit?**

Taking PrEP is more than just taking a pill every day—it also means frequent medical provider visits. If you're considering starting PrEP, the following can serve as a guide to help you understand what is involved and to help you and your doctor and/or nurse decide together if this will be a useful HIV prevention strategy for you.

### **Before Starting**

- Talk about why you're interested in taking PrEP.
- Review potential side effects, HIV risk reduction practices, and the importance of adherence (taking the pill consistently).
- Have baseline lab work completed:
  - Take an HIV test.
  - Test for hepatitis A, B and C.
  - Test for kidney health.
  - Test for STIs including syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia.
- If applicable, discuss whether you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.

### **Beginning PrEP Therapy**

- You will be provided with a 90-day supply of Truvada or Descovy. Take one tablet daily.
- You will be encouraged adhere to condom use for 7 days after starting PrEP if you engage in receptive anal sex.
- You will be encouraged to adhere to condom use for 21 days after starting PrEP if you engage in vaginal sex.

### **Follow Up Evaluation Every Three (3) Months**

- Review any medication side effects, HIV risk reduction practices, and the importance of medication adherence.
- Routine lab work:
  - Re-test for HIV.
  - Re-test for changes in kidney health.
  - Re-test for other STIs like syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea.
- If applicable, test for pregnancy.

*If you are interested in learning more about PrEP or would like to get started, please make an appointment with us! Feel free to stop by to make an appointment or call us at 610-896-1089 to get set up. We look forward to working with you.*

### **Resources/References:**

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). Retrieved October 29, 2019, from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/prep/index.html>.

[www.prepfacts.org](http://www.prepfacts.org)

Taking medicines to prevent HIV before exposure (The Basics). Post TW, ed. UpToDate. Waltham, MA: UpToDate Inc. <https://www.uptodate.com> (Accessed on October 29, 2019.)

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