

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I miss a dose?

It is not uncommon for people to forget or skip a dose. However, when you remember that you missed your dose you should try to take it right away, and then continue taking Truvada as usual. If you have missed a couple of doses, call (205) 996 – 4119 for more information.

What if I need to reschedule my appointment?

PrEP Clinic is held at the 1917 Clinic every 2nd and 4th Friday afternoon of the month. If you need to reschedule an appointment, it is best that you call as soon as you know and reschedule to come into the PrEP clinic before or after your originally scheduled appointment.

Can I take more than one pill a day to decrease my risk?

No, there is no evidence to suggest that taking more than one pill a day will decrease your risk or make PrEP more effective. Taking more than one pill a day can actually be bad for you and make you feel sick.

How long does it take for Truvada to be effective?

It takes about 7 days in the rectum and 21 days in the vagina for Truvada to really get to work in your body. And since we don't know how long exactly it will take for you, it is important to take Truvada every day, not just for a few days before you have sex. Taking Truvada every day enables you to be more spontaneous and safe.

Do I really have to take it every day?

Yes, every day. The failures of other PrEP studies have been explained largely by the fact that people weren't taking their Truvada. When people did take their Truvada and had detectable levels in their bodies, the effectiveness of PrEP was greater than 90% (compared to the 44% when people didn't take it every day). Some studies have shown that taking Truvada only 4 times a week can give you some protection against HIV but your level of protection increases if you take it more often. Plus, once you get into a routine with taking PrEP, it can be easier to take it every day rather than just every once in a while.

What if I want to stop taking PrEP?

If you want to stop taking PrEP, give us a call! We'll talk with you about the reasons you want to stop taking PrEP and advise you on the best path to take from there. It is your decision; we just want to help you stay safe even if you do decide to stop taking PrEP.

What if I lose my medication?

If you lose your medication, you should call us right away so that we can discuss what is best for you to do.

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If I'm on PrEP, why do I need to take an HIV test every time I come in?

If you do become HIV positive while on PrEP continuing to take PrEP may lead to resistance to one or both of the medications that Truvada contains. This means that these medications will not be effective at treating your infection and it will be harder to keep you healthy. We will only prescribe Truvada as PrEP after you have tested negative for HIV infection.

Do I have to use condoms?

We would definitely recommend it! PrEP isn't 100% effective on its own, so using another form of protection or risk reduction strategy is a good option. Try to think of PrEP more like a safety net for when you slip up and don't use condoms, or for when the condom breaks. If condom use really isn't your style, there are a number of other risk reduction strategies you can use, like having sex with fewer people, getting tested and treated for STIs regularly, and having open and honest communication with your partners about sex and risk.

What are the side-effects of PrEP?

The side-effects of PrEP may include stomach problems, rash, itchiness, gas, and headaches. These side-effects normally go away within the first month of taking PrEP. If they continue or get worse, call us and we will figure out the best course of action to take. To lessen some of these effects, you can take the pill with food, or take the pill right before you go to bed.

Why do you need to know so much about my sex-life?

It also allows us to have a more in depth discussion with you about how to keep you healthy. Your health is our main priority and it should be yours too. But we can only address what you tell us, so try to be open and honest when answering these questions.