Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV Prevention — Fast Facts

- Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is a way to help prevent HIV by taking a pill every day, along with consistent condom use
- PrEP must be taken every day to be most effective
- People who are at substantial risk for HIV should talk to their doctor about PrEP
- PrEP users must see their healthcare provider at least every three months for medication refills, repeat HIV testing and follow-up

For more information about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention, please contact:

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Adapted from:
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- PrEP Guidelines from New York State Department of Health
- National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention
- Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV Prevention

What You Need to Know
What Is PrEP?
PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis, is a way for people who do not have HIV to help prevent HIV infection by taking a pill called Truvada every day. The pill contains two medicines that are also used, in combination with other medicines, to treat HIV. When someone is exposed to HIV through sex or injection drug use, PrEP can help stop the virus from establishing a permanent infection.

When used consistently, PrEP has been shown to greatly reduce the risk of HIV infection in people who are at substantial risk. PrEP is much less effective when it is not taken consistently.

PrEP is a powerful HIV prevention tool, and can be combined with condoms and other prevention methods to provide even greater protection than when used alone. People who use PrEP must commit to taking the drug daily and seeing their healthcare provider at least every three months for HIV testing and follow-up care, including blood work and sexually transmitted infection (STI) screening.

PrEP does NOT prevent against other STIs.

Should I Consider PrEP?
PrEP should be considered for people who are HIV negative and at substantial risk for HIV infection:

- **For sexual transmission**, this includes anyone who is in an ongoing relationship with an HIV-positive partner, including:
  - HIV-negative men who have sex with men (gay or bisexual)
  - Transgender individuals who have sex with high-risk partners
  - Heterosexual men or women who do not regularly use condoms during sex with partners who are at risk of HIV infection
- **For heterosexual couples** where one partner has HIV and the other does not, PrEP is one of several options to protect the partner during conception and pregnancy.
- **For people who inject drugs**, this includes people who have injected illicit drugs in the past six months and who have shared injection equipment or been in drug treatment for injection drug use in the past six months.

Is PrEP Safe?
Some people in clinical studies of PrEP had early side effects such as an upset stomach or loss of appetite, but these were mild and usually went away in the first month. Some people also had a mild headache. You should tell your healthcare provider if these or other symptoms become severe or do not go away.

Why Take PrEP?
With 50,000 new HIV infections a year in the United States, and no cure or vaccine for HIV, prevention is key.

Does PrEP Work?
Because no prevention strategy is 100 percent effective, patients taking PrEP are encouraged to use other effective HIV-prevention methods to maximally reduce their risk, such as:

- Using male or female condoms consistently and correctly with every sexual encounter
- Getting HIV-tested with partners and choosing less risky sexual practices
- Getting into drug treatment programs and using sterile equipment

How Can I Start PrEP?
If you think you are at substantial risk for HIV, talk to your healthcare provider about PrEP. If you are eligible, you will get a general physical and get tested for HIV and other STIs. Your blood will also be tested to check kidney and liver function. If PrEP seems safe for you, you may be given a prescription.

How Affordable Is PrEP?
Most insurance plans, including Medicaid, cover PrEP. If you are unable to afford your co-pay or you do not have health insurance, you may be eligible for patient-assistance programs.