

Preventing HIV During Pregnancy/Breastfeeding: Using PrEP &/or PEP

The Basics | Why do I need to think about preventing HIV during pregnancy and/or breastfeeding?

- Studies show the changes that take place in a pregnant woman's body may make it more likely to get HIV from a partner. This makes preventing HIV during pregnancy especially important for you and your baby.
- HIV can be passed on from a woman to a child during pregnancy or breastfeeding.
- Just after someone acquires HIV, the risk of passing on HIV to a partner or infant is highest.

How can I prevent HIV during pregnancy and/or breastfeeding?

- Using a male or **female condom** with lube when you have vaginal sex or anal sex. Using condoms is effective at preventing HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Using a female condom may give you more control.
- Engaging in ongoing prenatal care is a way to keep you and your baby healthy. Getting tested and treated for STIs will also reduce your risk of getting HIV. It's important to get tested for HIV and STIs often.
- If you have a partner or partners living with HIV, it is nearly impossible for them to pass on HIV to you if they are taking their antiretrovirals (HIV medications) consistently and maintaining an undetectable viral load.
- Using PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis). Talk to your medical provider about the possibility of starting PrEP.
- Using PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) if you may have been recently exposed to HIV.

WHAT ARE PrEP AND PEP?

PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)

- PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is medication that an HIV-negative person takes to keep from getting HIV.
- Currently, the approved PrEP medication is Truvada.
- PrEP works if taken daily.
- PrEP is an HIV prevention method that gives you choice and control. It can also give you privacy as it does not have to be discussed with your partner(s).
- The decision to take the pill is yours.

PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis)

- If you have been exposed to HIV recently, there is another option for you. **PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis)** is an emergency medication available by prescription that can stop HIV infection if started within 72 hours of exposure. If you are HIV negative and may have been exposed to HIV within the last 72 hours, go to a clinic or emergency room immediately and ask for PEP.

Is PrEP Right for Me? Consider PrEP if you are an HIV-negative woman who:

- Worries about getting HIV
- Has sex without a condom with partners of unknown HIV status
- Recently had gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, or a new herpes diagnosis
- Injects drugs and shares needles or works
- Exchanges sex for \$/food/housing/drugs
- Has a male sex partner who:
 - Has vaginal or anal sex with other partners without a condom
 - Has sex with men
 - Injects drugs
 - Has HIV or sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

You and your medical provider can discuss the pros and cons of being on PrEP, as well as other prevention options during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

BEYOND THE BASICS: MORE ABOUT PrEP

IS PrEP EFFECTIVE?

PrEP is safe and effective. PrEP can help reduce the chance of getting HIV by over 90% when taken daily.

WHAT ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS?

Most people tolerate PrEP very well, although Truvada may have side effects. Anyone taking PrEP should be followed by a medical provider. Some people experience nausea when first starting Truvada. Rarely, PrEP causes reversible changes in the kidney. This is why labs are checked regularly while on PrEP. Truvada is usually well tolerated by pregnant women, as well.

IS PrEP SAFE DURING PREGNANCY?

Engaging in medical care and talking to your provider are essential to good health for you and your baby. If you decide to take PrEP, your baby will be exposed to Truvada. However, the medicines in Truvada have been studied among pregnant women living with HIV and hepatitis B and there is no known increased chance of birth defects, growth problems, or complications during pregnancy, including preterm birth and miscarriage.

IS PrEP SAFE TO TAKE WHILE BREASTFEEDING?

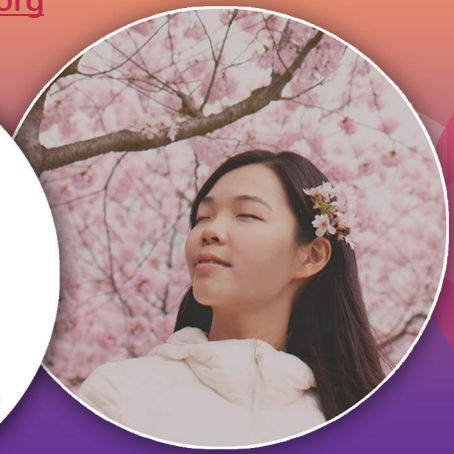
Research with women taking Truvada as PrEP or as treatment for HIV or hepatitis B suggests that Truvada is safe during breastfeeding. Only a very small amount of Truvada gets into the baby through breastmilk, so babies do not likely experience side effects when their mother is taking PrEP.

CAN I AFFORD PrEP?

Many insurance companies cover the cost of PrEP. There are also assistance programs for those who qualify. Almost everyone who needs PrEP is able to get it.

HOW CAN I GET PrEP?

To find a PrEP provider near you, check out www.PleasePrEPMe.org



FOR PROVIDERS:

In a meta-analysis of 26 articles, no statistically significant differences were observed between tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF - one component of Truvada) and comparison non-TDF regimens in pregnancy incidence, stillbirth/pregnancy loss, preterm delivery less than 37 weeks, low birth weight <2500/<1500 g, small size for gestational age, birth defects, or infant (>14 days) or maternal mortality. A 2018 NEJM study was also reassuring.

Given available safety data, there does not appear to be a safety-related rationale for prohibiting PrEP during pregnancy/lactation or for discontinuing PrEP in HIV-negative women receiving PrEP who become pregnant and are at continuing risk of HIV acquisition.

Other resources and considerations for providers:

- For resources, provider tools, and more information, visit: [HIVE's Provider Resource page](#) and [HIVE's PrEP4Women page](#)
- Any pregnant woman prescribed an antiretroviral should be added to [the Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry](#)
- Free 24/7 telephone consultation for providers from the [Clinician Consultation Center](#): (888) 448-8765