



# PREVENTING HIV & PREGNANCY

## FOR HIV-NEGATIVE WOMEN PARTNERED WITH MEN LIVING WITH HIV

Whether you don't want to have a child or are not ready yet, the information below can help you make informed decisions around preventing pregnancy as well as HIV.

There are many different kinds of birth control that work well at preventing pregnancy. If/when you feel ready to have a baby, you can learn more [here](#) about safe and reliable ways to plan a pregnancy if your partner is living with HIV.

### Important facts about HIV transmission

HIV is passed on through contact with these body fluids:

- Blood, including period blood and any blood in saliva (spit), urine (pee), and feces (poop)
- Semen ("cum") and other sexual fluids from the penis ("pre-cum")
- Vaginal fluids
- Breastmilk

HIV can be transmitted:

- To a baby during pregnancy, labor, delivery, or chest/breastfeeding if the person giving birth is living with HIV and not consistently on HIV treatment
- By having sex without using condoms or HIV-prevention medications
- Reusing or sharing needles or other works/equipment for injecting drugs, tattoos, or other substances

HIV is *not* spread through contact with these body fluids:

- sweat
- tears
- saliva
- feces
- urine

HIV is *not* spread by hugging, holding hands, kissing, drinking or eating from the same cups or utensils as a person living with HIV, or by using a toilet also used by someone living with HIV.

For more on HIV and how it is passed from person to person:

The Well Project: [www.thewellproject.org/hiv-information/hiv-transmission](http://www.thewellproject.org/hiv-information/hiv-transmission)



# Preventing HIV During Sex

## Undetectable=untransmittable

HIV treatment helps keep people living with HIV healthy and helps get the virus down to an undetectable level. “Undetectable” means that a test cannot detect the virus in a blood sample from a person living with HIV. Studies have shown that someone who is undetectable for 6 or more continuous months while on HIV treatment does not transmit the virus during sex.

Undetectable doesn’t mean that there’s no HIV present in the blood. It means the virus is being controlled. This concept is also known as U=U, short for “undetectable=untransmittable.” You can support your partner to stay undetectable by helping them take their HIV medications and access medical care.

You and your partner may decide the options below add an extra layer of protection. Or you may decide they are unnecessary if your partner maintains an undetectable viral load.

## Condoms

Using external (“male”) or **internal (“female”) condoms** decreases your chance of getting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Condoms also help prevent pregnancy. No other form of birth control can decrease your chance of getting HIV.

## PrEP

PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis, is a pill to help keep you HIV negative. When taken as prescribed, PrEP is highly effective. It’s safe and generally well tolerated. PrEP is safe to use with birth control. Most insurance plans (public and private) cover PrEP.

PrEP works for women, men, people of transgender experience, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, youth, and people who inject drugs.

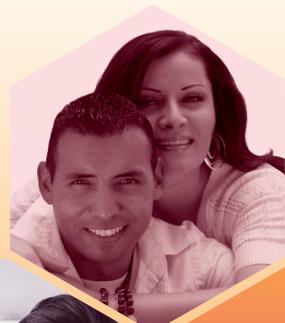
PrEP works because the drugs in the pill prevent HIV from multiplying. PrEP must be taken as prescribed for it to work.

## PEP

PEP, or post-exposure prophylaxis, is a combination of medications you can take after a possible exposure to HIV. PEP is most effective the sooner it’s started, and must be started within 72 hours of the exposure. PEP is taken daily for 28–30 days.

## Testing for and treating STIs

If your partner’s viral load is detectable, you may be more likely to get HIV if either you or your partner have a sexually transmitted infection. Many STIs have no symptoms. It is important for you and your partner to get tested and treated for STIs.



# Options for Preventing Pregnancy

There are many forms of birth control available to you and your partner. For a visual guide to these birth control options, and to learn more about how they might work for you and your partner, visit [bedsider.org](https://bedsider.org), [plannedparenthood.org](https://plannedparenthood.org), or [youngmenshealthsite.org](https://youngmenshealthsite.org).

## Most effective

- IUD (intrauterine device): A small piece of flexible plastic that stays inside the uterus and prevents pregnancy for 3 to 12 years, depending on the brand. Must be inserted and removed by a health care professional.
- Birth control implant: A small, thin rod (about the size of a matchstick) inserted under the skin of the upper arm that releases hormones and prevents pregnancy for up to 4 years. Must be inserted and removed by a health care professional.
- Sterilization: If you never want to have a child, you or your partner can permanently prevent pregnancy by having surgical sterilization—either tubal ligation (“getting your tubes tied”) for people whose bodies make eggs or vasectomy for people whose bodies make sperm.

## Very effective

- The shot (Depo-Provera): An injection of hormones that prevents pregnancy for 3 months. Must be administered by a health care professional. Recent studies have demonstrated that women who are users of the shot may be more likely to get HIV through sex. For more info on this, check out [this link](#). Talk with your provider if you have questions or concerns.
- The pill: A pill that contains hormones to prevent pregnancy. The pill must be taken every single day to be effective.
- The patch: A small, thin square of flexible plastic worn on the skin of the belly, upper arm, butt, or back that releases hormones to prevent pregnancy. The patch is changed once a week.
- The ring: A small, flexible ring that is inserted into the vagina and releases hormones to prevent pregnancy. A single ring can be worn for 21 to 28 days at a time.

## Less effective

- Condoms: Thin, stretchy pouches that keep sperm out of the vagina. External (“male”) condoms are worn over the penis. Internal (“female”) condoms are worn inside the vagina. Condoms are the only form of birth control that also prevents HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.
- Diaphragm: A shallow, bendable cup that is inserted in the vagina and covers the cervix during sex to prevent pregnancy. Works best when used with spermicide (a gel or cream that kills sperm).
- Withdrawal: Also called “pulling out,” withdrawal means pulling the penis out of the vagina before any semen comes out (ejaculation), to keep sperm out of the vagina.

