



# PrEP during Pregnancy and/or While Breastfeeding: A Guide for HIV-Women with Partners who are Living with HIV



*“PrEP allows a woman to control her own destiny by not having to rely on her partner’s behavior, his ability to take antiretroviral*

*therapy, to have an undetectable viral load, to get tested. These benefits far out-*

*weigh the potential risks [of PrEP] for many women.” - Erica Aaron, CRNP, Drexel College of Medicine*

## Preventing HIV During Pregnancy

- Studies have shown that the changes that take place during pregnancy in a woman’s body can make it more likely to get HIV from a partner. This makes preventing HIV during pregnancy especially important for you and your baby.
- HIV is most easily passed during the weeks following acquisition, when viral load is very high. This is why knowing your partner’s status is very important, particularly when trying to get pregnant, during pregnancy or breastfeeding. Support your partner in getting tested for HIV.
- HIV can be passed on from mother to child during pregnancy or breastfeeding. Get tested for HIV and STIs often.
- Engaging in ongoing prenatal care is a way to keep you and your baby healthy; getting tested and treated for sexually transmitted infections will also reduce the likelihood of your getting HIV.
- If your partner(s) is living with HIV, some women choose to support their partner(s) in taking their antiretrovirals (HIV meds) and maintaining an undetectable viral load. An undetectable viral load reduces the risk of HIV by 96%.
- Using a male or female condom with lube when you have vaginal sex or anal sex. Using condoms is effective at helping prevent pregnancy, HIV, gonorrhea, chlamydia, herpes, syphilis and HPV/genital warts. Using a female condom may give you more control. Check out this [demo video on female condoms](#).
- Using Truvada as PrEP

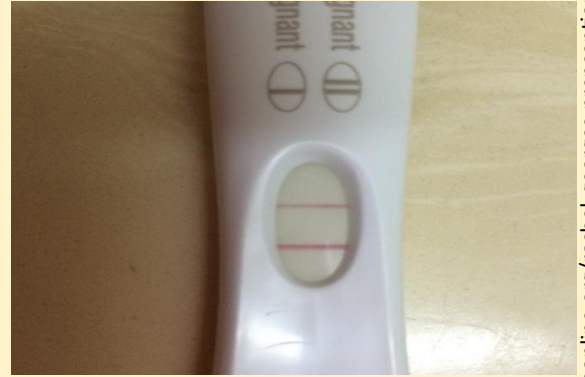


Photo Credit: <http://www.hiveonline.org/rachel-georges-preception-story/>



Photo Credit: [Huffington Post](http://Huffington Post)

## Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

- PrEP is when an HIV-negative person takes HIV medication to keep from getting HIV
- Like any HIV prevention, PrEP works when you use it!
- PrEP can reduce the chance of getting HIV by over 90% when taken as prescribed.
- This method requires you to take medicine every day, and these medicines may have side effects. Anyone taking HIV medicine should be followed by a medical provider to check

for side effects. Many insurance companies cover the cost of PrEP. There are also assistance programs for those who qualify.

- PrEP is one HIV prevention method that does not have to be negotiated or discussed with your partner(s). The decision to take the pill daily is yours.

## PrEP Use During Pregnancy

- PrEP is one of the ways to prevent HIV transmission while you are pregnant and beyond.
- PrEP use during pregnancy and breastfeeding has not been fully studied, though we have information about women living with HIV who have taken the same medication through pregnancy and breastfeeding. Talk to your medical provider about the possibility of starting PrEP.
- In PrEP trials published so far among serodifferent couples, PrEP was discontinued if there was a pregnancy detected – usually about 6 weeks into the pregnancy. No differences in birth outcomes of infant growth were found. There is an ongoing study of pregnant women taking PrEP. We should know more from this study in 2016.
- The medications in Truvada have been studied among pregnant women living with HIV. There is no increased risk of birth defects. One study showed an increased risk of preterm birth, but it's not clear that is due to Truvada.



## PrEP Use While Breastfeeding

- While there is not much information about Truvada use while breastfeeding, there are some studies involving women with HIV living in various regions of Africa who breastfeed. These studies have not found the medications in Truvada to be dangerous.
- Truvada is also used to treat Hepatitis B and is often prescribed for use during pregnancy and while breastfeeding for mothers who have Hep B. Truvada has not been found to be unsafe for use by breastfeeding mothers.

## Other considerations

- Engaging in medical care for you and your partner(s) and talking to your provider are essential to good health for you and your baby.
- You and your medical provider can discuss the pros and cons of being on PrEP, as well as other prevention options, during pregnancy and while breastfeeding.
- If you decide to take Truvada, your baby will be exposed to the medicines, but there is no known increased chance of birth defects.
- Truvada is usually well-tolerated by pregnant women.
- There is support for you as you consider what is the best option for you, your baby, your family. Talk to a provider or social worker who understands you.



### Questions?

For more info,  
check out  
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