PrEP vs. PEP

PrEP and PEP are methods for preventing HIV that involve taking HIV medicines. When you take steps to protect yourself against a disease, like HIV, it’s called prophylaxis.

PrEP and PEP are for people who don’t have HIV, but are at risk of getting it.

### What’s it called?

- **PrEP**: stands for pre-exposure prophylaxis.
- **PEP**: stands for post-exposure prophylaxis.

### When is it taken?

- **Before HIV exposure.** PrEP is taken every day, before possible exposure.
- **After HIV exposure.** In emergency situations, PEP is taken within 72 hours (3 days) after possible exposure.

### Who’s it for?

- **PrEP** is for people who don’t have HIV and:
  - are at risk of getting HIV from sex
  - are at risk of getting HIV from injection drug use

- **PEP** is for people who don’t have HIV but may have been exposed:
  - during sex
  - by sharing injection drug equipment
  - during a sexual assault
  - at work through a needlestick or other injury

### How effective is it?

- **PrEP** can reduce the risk of getting HIV from sex by about 99% and from injection drug use by at least 74%.
- **PEP** can prevent HIV when taken correctly, but it is not always effective. Start PEP as soon as possible to give it the best chance of working.

### How do you get it?

- **Ask your health care provider about a prescription for PrEP**, or use PrEPLocator.org to find a health care provider in your area who can prescribe PrEP.
- **Within 72 hours of a potential exposure to HIV, talk to your health care provider or an emergency room doctor about a prescription for PEP.**

For more information, visit HIVinfo.NIH.gov