

HIV Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)

FACT SHEET

What is PEP?

Post Exposure Prophylaxis or PEP is an emergency treatment that is given to a person exposed to HIV to prevent HIV.

- The sooner PEP is started after a possible exposure, the more effective it is.
- PEP is using ARV medication to prevent HIV.
- PEP must be started within 72 hours of possible exposure to HIV.
- PEP can only be taken by HIV-negative individuals.
- PEP is taken for 28 days after possible exposure to HIV to prevent an HIV infection.

Who should take PEP?

- Anyone who may have been exposed to HIV through contact with blood, body fluids, during sex or through their work.
- It's only recommended for people who are HIV negative or don't know their status.

Is PEP safe?



It is safe to take PEP to prevent you from getting HIV.



PEP can be taken when pregnant and breast-feeding, and will not hurt you or your baby.



How are ARVs used differently for HIV prevention and treatment?

ARVs can be used to prevent HIV:

- **PrEP:** When ARVs are taken before someone is exposed to HIV to protect them from HIV it is called Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).
- **PEP:** When ARVs are taken within 72 hours after exposure to HIV to prevent HIV it is called PEP.

ARVs can be used as treatment:

- **ART:** ARV are used to treat HIV-positive people to reduce the levels of HIV in the body, this is called ART.

Nov2022



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

AIDS Helpline No: 0800 012322

Getting started on PEP:

FACT SHEET

1. Visit your clinic as soon as possible if you had unprotected sex or came into contact or other body fluids.
2. Tell the clinic staff that you need to be seen to immediately.
3. PEP can only be given to you if you were exposed to HIV in the past 72 hours.
4. If you report within 72 hours you will be given your first dose of PEP.
5. You will be tested for HIV to check that you are HIV negative.
6. If you test HIV negative the nurse will check if you require PEP.
7. The nurse will give you a prescription for PEP for 28 days.

If you test positive, the nurse will start you on treatment.

How to take PEP:

- PEP must be taken for 28 days.
- Try to take PEP at the same time every day.
- If you miss a dose, take the next dose as soon as you remember.
- Do not take a double dose.
- Continue to use of condoms while you are on PEP.
- Some people that take PEP may feel nauseous or have diarrhoea or headaches.
- If you do experience any of these do not stop taking PEP, visit the clinic for further help.

When do you need to come back to the clinic?

- You will return after 4 weeks and again in 12 weeks for an HIV test or any other tests that may be needed.
- The clinic will give an appointment for when you need to return.
- These tests are important to make sure that the PEP has worked and that you have not become HIV-positive.
- If you require help or more information, visit your clinic.

Protect yourself from HIV

- If you are worried that you may be exposed to HIV again talk to the nurse about taking PrEP and using condoms.

Nov2022



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

AIDS Helpline No: 0800 012322