

PEP AND YOUNG PEOPLE

PEP stands for post-exposure prophylaxis. It is a way to prevent contracting HIV after a possible recent exposure (sexual assault, a condom breaks or slips off, condomless sex, or needle-sharing for drugs, hormones, or tattoos). This involves taking HIV medications within 3 days, or 72 hours, after the possible recent exposure.

If a young person believes they have recently been exposed to HIV during sex, through sharing needles, or if they have been sexually assaulted, it is recommended that they talk to a healthcare provider or emergency room doctor about PEP immediately.

PEP consists of 2-3 antiretroviral medications and should be taken for 28 days. A health provider can determine what treatment is right for you based on how you were potentially exposed to HIV.

PEP is effective, but not 100%, so it is recommended that young people use condoms and practice safer injection methods while taking PEP. PEP may cause **side effects** like nausea in some people.

PEP is not recommended after oral sex or other low risk activities. It is important to note that HIV is spread only in certain body fluids. These fluids include blood, semen, pre-seminal fluids, rectal fluids, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. **HIV transmission** is only possible if these fluids come in contact with a mucous membrane or damaged tissue or be directly injected into the bloodstream (from a needle or syringe). Mucous membranes are found inside the rectum, the vagina, the opening of the penis, and the mouth.

PEP is an **emergency HIV prevention method**. PEP does not prevent infection from other STIs like herpes, syphilis, and gonorrhea, nor does it prevent pregnancy. Consulting a knowledgeable and youth-friendly healthcare provider may support you in accessing and affording PEP. For instance, if you are uninsured, your healthcare provider may suggest **pharmaceutical patient assistance programs** to balance out fees.

- **Providers** should be aware of PEP and ensure that young people have access to the pill, when necessary.
- PEP should be widely available in college and university health centers.

PrEP Resources:

- advocatesforyouth.org/issue/hiv/
- advocatesforyouth.org/nyhaad
- advocatesforyouth.org/mentorship
- www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/pep.html
- www.whatworksinyouthhiv.org/strategies/pep-post-exposure-prophylaxis

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THINGS TO KNOW:

- PEP stands for post-exposure prophylaxis. It is a way to prevent contracting HIV after a possible recent exposure (sexual assault, a condom breaks or slips off, condomless sex, or needle-sharing for drugs, hormones, or tattoos).
- This involves taking HIV medications within 3 days, or 72 hours, after the possible recent exposure.
- If a young person believes they have recently being exposed to HIV during sex, through sharing needles, or if they have been sexually assaulted, it is recommended that they talk to a healthcare provider or emergency room doctor about PEP immediately.
- PEP may cause **side effects** like nausea in some people.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- PEP is not recommended after oral sex or other low risk activities.
- HIV is spread only in certain body fluids from a person living with HIV. These fluids include blood, semen, pre-seminal fluids, rectal fluids, vaginal fluids, and breast milk.
- PEP does not prevent infection from other STIs like herpes, syphilis, and gonorrhea, nor does it prevent pregnancy.
- Consulting a knowledgeable and youth-friendly healthcare provider may support you in accessing and affording PEP.
- If you are uninsured, your healthcare provider may suggest **pharmaceutical patient assistance programs** to balance out fees.