



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

# JIPENDE JI PrEP

FREQUENTLY ASKED  
QUESTIONS  
ABOUT PrEP





## Treatment as Prevention

Treatment as prevention refers to HIV prevention methods that use antiretroviral therapy (ART) to decrease the risk of HIV transmission. Antiretroviral therapy reduces the HIV viral load in the blood, semen, vaginal fluid and rectal fluid to very low levels (undetectable), reducing the risk of onwards HIV transmission.

## Current HIV prevention methods

Over the years, the Kenyan government has implemented a number of HIV prevention strategies that include; HIV Testing and Counselling (HTC), condom use, Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT), Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC), Post Exposure Prophylaxis and healthy lifestyles among others.

## New HIV prevention methods

In 2016, the Government of Kenya introduced a new HIV prevention method known as Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), which uses antiretroviral drugs to protect HIV negative people from HIV before potential exposure to the virus.

## FAQs

# Frequently Asked Questions



### Q. What is PrEP?

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) refers to antiretroviral drugs taken daily by HIV negative people who are at ongoing risk of HIV infection to reduce their chances of becoming infected.

### Q. How effective is PrEP?

If used consistently, PrEP can reduce the risk of HIV infection by over 90%. However, because it does not protect against other STI's or unplanned pregnancy, it should always be used with other preventive measures such as condoms for safer sexual practices.

### Q. How does PrEP prevent HIV?

If you have been taking PrEP correctly and consistently, it helps build a protective layer around your body cells, such that if you get exposed to HIV, for example by having unprotected sex with someone who is living with HIV or coming into contact with infected body fluid, PrEP can stop the virus from establishing itself in your body.

### Q. What are the benefits of PrEP?

If used consistently, PrEP can significantly **REDUCE THE RISK OF HIV INFECTION**, giving you peace of mind. However, it does not protect against other STIs and unplanned pregnancies and should be used with other preventive measures such as condoms.

## Q. What are the side effects of PrEP?

Some people who take PrEP may experience side effects that last for a **SHORT PERIOD**. These may include; headache, weight loss, nausea, vomiting and abdominal discomfort. These side effects often reduce or stop after a few weeks of taking PrEP.



headache



vomiting



nausea

## Q. How should I take PrEP Pills?

For PrEP to be effective, one needs to take it for at least **7 DAYS BEFORE ANY EXPOSURE** to a risky sexual encounter. Thereafter, the PrEP pill should be taken once a day for as long as the person remains at risk of HIV infection (or as advised by a health care provider).

You should not take two pills at the same time or on the same day to make up for a missed dose. To protect against other STIs and unwanted pregnancies, it is best to use PrEP alongside other prevention methods such as condoms.

## Q. Am I protected from HIV if I miss a PrEP pill?

When you miss one or more pills, you are greatly reducing the ability of PrEP to provide you with full protection against HIV infection. Evidence has showed that PrEP provides the best protection from HIV if it is **TAKEN CONSISTENTLY EVERY DAY**.

## **Q. Can I share PrEP with others?**

PrEP should only be taken by the person prescribed and should **NOT BE SHARED** with others. Anyone who wants to use PrEP should discuss their intention with a health care provider.

## **Q. Who can take PrEP?**

PrEP isn't recommended for everyone. It's for people who are **HIV NEGATIVE** and are at a high risk of HIV infection. PrEP may be an option for you, if you are HIV negative and you have a sexual partner who is:

- Known to be HIV positive and not on ART OR
- Is on ART but does not take medication consistently or has not achieved viral suppression.

Also if:

- You have sexual partner(s) of unknown HIV status;
- You have multiple sexual partners;
- You have frequent STIs and/or you use injecting drugs;
- You are engaging in transactional sex (sex in exchange of gifts etc.);
- You have recurrent use of Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP);
- You are a sero-discordant couple (where one partner is HIV positive and the other is HIV negative) trying to conceive;
- You do not use condoms or you use them inconsistently;
- You experience frequent condom bursts or you are unable to negotiate condom use with persons of unknown HIV status.

It is advisable for you to seek guidance from a health care provider for any further clarification.

## **Q. If I take PrEP, can I stop using condoms?**

No, you **SHOULDN'T STOP USING CONDOMS**. While it significantly reduces your risk of HIV infection, PrEP does not protect you from other STIs such as herpes and gonorrhoea or unwanted pregnancies and should be combined with other methods such as condoms to reduce your risk even further.

## **Q. Does PrEP prevent STIs and pregnancy?**

No, PrEP **DOES NOT PREVENT STIs** and it also **DOES NOT PREVENT PREGNANCY**. PrEP should therefore be used together with a condom. For females who are on PrEP and do not want to conceive, they should use a family planning method.

## **Q. Is PrEP a vaccine?**

No, PrEP is **NOT A VACCINE**. It does not cure HIV. It is also not a morning after pill.

## **Q. How is PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) different from Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)?**

Even though PrEP and PEP are both taken by HIV negative people to prevent HIV infection, they are different. **PrEP** is used by HIV negative people who are at ongoing risk of HIV **BEFORE EXPOSURE** to reduce their chances of being infected with HIV. **PEP** is used by HIV negative people **AFTER A POSSIBLE** exposure to HIV but must be taken within 72 hours.

## **Q. How long can I take PrEP?**

Someone can take PrEP for as long as they remain at risk of HIV infection. However, it is important to continue consulting a health care provider for advice.

## **Q. When should I stop/discontinue taking PrEP?**

You should stop/ discontinue PrEP if you meet ANY of the following criteria:

- If you become HIV positive;
- If you reduce your risk of getting infected with HIV;
- If the health care provider informs you that your kidney (Renal) function is low after doing some tests;
- If you request to stop;
- If you are not adhering to the drugs well;
- If you are in a discordant relationship and your HIV positive partner has achieved sustained viral suppression. However, you should continue to consistently use condom.

## **Q. Where is PrEP available?**

Currently PrEP is available at select health facilities.

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**For more information,  
visit your nearest health care provider**