

# PrEP vs. PEP

When you take steps to protect yourself against a disease, like HIV, it's called prophylaxis. PrEP and PEP are for protecting people who are HIV negative.

PrEP stands for pre-exposure prophylaxis.

## What's it called?

PEP stands for post-exposure prophylaxis.

### Before HIV exposure.

PrEP is taken before sex, drug use, or other HIV exposure.

## When is it taken?

### After HIV exposure.

In emergency situations, PEP is started within 72 hours after possible exposure, and taken for a month thereafter.

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

## Who's it for?

PEP is for people who don't have HIV but may have been exposed:

- during sex
- during a sexual assault
- at work through a needlestick or other injury
- by sharing injection drug equipment

Consistent use of PrEP can reduce the risk of getting HIV from sex by about 99% and from injection drug use by at least 74%.

## How effective is it?

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.

Ask your health care provider about a prescription for PrEP, or use [PrEPlocator.org](https://www.preroplocator.org) to find a health care provider in your area who can prescribe PrEP.

## How do you get it?

Within 72 hours after potential exposure to HIV, get a PEP prescription from your health care provider, urgent care, or an emergency room.

For more information, visit [HIVinfo.NIH.gov](https://www.hivinfo.nih.gov).