

What is PEP?

PEP is a 4-week course of HIV pills available to you if you think you've been at risk of exposure to HIV. This may be important if your partner is HIV positive. Condoms stop you catching HIV if you use them regularly and correctly. But accidents can happen: a condom splits or comes off during sex, or you forget to use one. This doesn't mean you'll get infected with HIV, but there is a risk. Taking PEP (**P**ost **E**xposure **P**rophylaxis) within 72 hours may stop you becoming infected.

Is PEP a cure for HIV/AIDS?

PEP is not an HIV/AIDS cure. There's no guarantee that if you take PEP, exposure to HIV will not turn into infection with HIV. However, taking anti-HIV drugs within 72 hours after exposure to HIV may prevent infection.

PEP isn't about taking your positive partner's HIV pills the morning after a night of unprotected sex.

Studies of pregnant HIV positive women have shown that using these drugs can prevent infection during birth. However if you're thinking about pregnancy, and you're the partner of a positive man or positive yourself, please see an HIV/AIDS doctor about what to do.

Don't leave it too late!

There's only a short time to act before the virus takes hold. PEP is strong medication. If taken immediately after exposure, within a few hours but no longer than 72 hours, it may give your immune system time to clear up any infection. PEP isn't much help if you leave it too late. The sooner the better!

1800 737 669



Ring the PEP Hotline

If you're worried you've been exposed to the HIV virus during sex, ring the 24 hour **PEP Hotline on 1800 737 669**. You may feel nervous and anxious when you ring. PEP staff are trained to help you work out whether you've been at risk of HIV infection and what to do next. You will not be asked the name or details of your positive partner, but some non-identifying details are taken. These details are confidential. This means that they will only be known by those staff who are helping you access PEP.

What do I take and for how long?

PEP is the medication used to treat HIV positive men and women. You take PEP twice a day for a month — and you need to take **every** pill to complete the treatment properly! There's an HIV blood test before starting, followed by two blood tests to see whether or not you've become infected. PEP does not involve any other medical procedures.

Are there side effects?

The long-term safety of PEP drugs is not known. People taking PEP can experience side effects: fatigue, nausea, headache, rash, and diarrhoea being the most common. An HIV/AIDS doctor will monitor your health while you're taking PEP.

Where can I get PEP?

PEP is available from HIV/AIDS doctors or Sexual Health Clinics and all NSW hospital accident and emergency departments. The PEP Hotline will tell you where to find your nearest PEP provider.

Taking care of your sexual health

Sex is an important part of our lives and something to be enjoyed. Having an HIV positive partner doesn't mean that you can't enjoy sex. It means that you need to talk to each other about sex and safer sex.

Making choices will help you reduce and prevent the risk of HIV transmission. Couples make different choices. You both need to feel safe and relaxed during sex.

Take care of your sexual health. Having other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can make it easier to become infected with HIV. A check-up at a sexual health centre can diagnose and treat any other STIs.

Use a condom during vaginal or anal sex and always use plenty of water-based lubricant (eg KY or Wetstuff). Latex condoms will tear if used with oil-based lubricants (eg Vaseline, baby oil, etc).

If you are concerned about becoming pregnant, you might want to consider the emergency contraceptive pill.

Ring the FPA Healthline 1300 658 886 for more information.

Not taking care of your sexual health

Remember!

- not using a condom
- withdrawing before ejaculation, or
- having a low viral load

Does **NOT** prevent HIV transmission

Want to know more?

- **PEP Hotline, 1800 737 669**
Call immediately if you think you might have been at risk of HIV infection. The Hotline will tell you how to access PEP and where to find your nearest sexual health clinic.
- **Positive Heterosexuals, Freecall 1800 812 404**
Call for peer support and education for HIV positive men and women, partners and families.
- **Women's HIV Support, AIDS Council of NSW, 9206 2026**
Call for peer support and education for positive women.
- **FPA Healthline, 1300 658 886**
Call if you are concerned about pregnancy and considering the emergency contraceptive pill.
- **FPA Health Centres, 1300 658 886**
Call to find the number of your nearest FPA Health Centre where you can get information and services on condom and contraceptive use, pap tests, breast checks, pregnancy tests, checks and treatment for STIs.

FPA Health

Heterosexual HIV/AIDS Service (CSAHS)



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**TIME TO
RING
THE PEP
HOTLINE...**