

BE READY WITH

# PrEP

FREQUENTLY ASKED  
QUESTIONS



# HELPFUL TERMS

## **ART**

Antiretroviral treatment (ART) is the use of combination of HIV medicines to treat HIV infection.

## **ARVs**

Antiretrovirals (ARVs) is the medication used to treat the virus that causes HIV.

## **HIV**

Human immunodeficiency virus.

## **PrEP**

Pre-exposure prophylaxis.

## **Prophylaxis**

To prevent an infection or disease.

## **PEP**

Post-exposure prophylaxis.

## **STIs**

Sexually transmitted infections.

# PrEP to stay safe

#PrEPforProtection



Having sex is a normal and natural practice. Sex feels good but unsafe sex can be dangerous.

**It's easy to stay safe if you PrEP for protection.**



## What is HIV?

HIV is a virus. It attacks and destroys cells in your body that defend against infection. Without these cells, your body cannot fight germs and diseases. HIV infection can lead to AIDS, the final stage of HIV infection. People may not know they have HIV until they are tested. An HIV test can tell if you have the virus.

### How would I get HIV?

HIV can be in body fluids such as blood, semen, seminal fluid, vaginal fluids, anal fluids, and breast milk.

#### You can get HIV through:

- ♦ having unprotected sex with a partner who is HIV + ve or whose HIV status you do not know.
- ♦ mother to child transmission.

You can also get HIV by sharing needles or syringes with someone who has HIV. Blood or body fluids with HIV might be left on the needles or syringe.

### What is PrEP?

PrEP Stands for pre-exposure prophylaxis. It is an HIV prevention medicine, which comes in the form of a pill taken daily. It is highly effective against HIV when taken everyday. It is a new HIV prevention method.

### Wait, is PrEP the same as PEP?

No, PrEP is not the same as PEP. PrEP is taken before HIV exposure to prevent HIV infection, whereas PEP is taken within 72 hours of exposure to HIV in order to prevent HIV infection.

## WHY PrEP?

- ✓ Easy to use
- ✓ Safe and highly effective
- ✓ Fits easily into your lifestyle
- ✓ Safe to use during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- ✓ Safe to use by women taking contraceptives
- ✓ Allows you to be in control of your sexual health

# What else should you know about PrEP?

- ◆ Safe to use during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- ◆ Safe to use by women taking contraceptives.
- ◆ Excessive alcohol may affect your judgment which could lead to risky sexual behaviour and make you forget to take your PrEP pill.





## What does PrEP not do?

PrEP does not cure HIV, prevent pregnancy, or prevent other STIs (such as syphilis, gonorrhoea, or chlamydia).

### How do I know if PrEP is the right option for me?

PrEP could be a good option for you to consider if you are HIV-negative, concerned about HIV prevention and within the last six months you have had:

- ♦ sex without a condom with a partner who is HIV positive or whose HIV status you do not know.
- ♦ sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- ♦ shared injection drug equipment (e.g. needles and syringes).

### PrEP WHO?

PrEP is only for individuals who are HIV negative. If you fit the criteria above, see a trained healthcare provider.

### Can I share PrEP with my friends or other people?

No, PrEP must never be shared. You must take one pill a day for PrEP to work and there will only be enough pills for you.

### **Will I have to pay for PrEP or the services at the clinic?**

No, you won't have to pay a thing. You will not be asked for payment.

### **Will I need to go back to the clinic and how often will I need to go back?**

You will be required to re-visit the clinic after one month and thereafter every three months. You will have the opportunity to discuss any issues that you may be facing while on PrEP with your healthcare provider who is there to support you. The healthcare provider will monitor your health and HIV status.

### **Where can I access PrEP?**

PrEP is being rolled out across the country at selected clinics and sites where the Ministry of Health is working with partners to make PrEP available throughout Zambia.

### **How long does it take for me to start PrEP?**

You could start PrEP on your first visit to the clinic.

### **What happens at the clinic?**

- You will be provided with counselling and assessed to determine your eligibility for PrEP. This will include an HIV test, screening for STIs, and tests for liver and kidney function.
- If you test negative for HIV, you will receive a supply of PrEP.
- If you test positive for HIV, you will be referred for antiretroviral treatment (ART).

### **How should I take PrEP for it to work well?**

- PrEP should be taken as instructed by a healthcare provider.
- PrEP has to be taken daily for it to work effectively.
- PrEP can be taken at any time of day but it is easiest to remember if you make it part of your daily routine, such as when you have your breakfast, so that you remember to do it everyday. This way it becomes a habit that fits easily into your lifestyle.
- If you forget to take a pill, take one as soon as you remember. Do not take more than one pill each day.







## How will PrEP make me feel? (Are there any side effects?)

Around one in ten people experience short-term, mild side effects from using PrEP. The most common are diarrhoea and nausea. PrEP can be taken with or without food, but to reduce stomach-related side effects it is best to take the pill with food. Side effects should disappear within a few weeks but if they continue, talk to your healthcare provider.

## PrEP HOW?

For it to be effective, PrEP must be taken every day and as instructed.

## How well does it work?

MORE THAN  
**90%**  
PROTECTION  
AGAINST HIV  
INFECTION

ABOUT  
**1 in 10**  
PEOPLE  
EXPERIENCE  
SIDE EFFECTS

## PrEP WHEN?

PrEP needs to be taken every day and requires regular visits to a health care provider.

### When does PrEP start working in my body?

It takes time for the PrEP medicine to build up in your body and start working (a minimum of 7 days for men and 21 for women).

**For it to continue working, it is important to take your PrEP pill daily even after the time period mentioned above.**

### If I take PrEP, do I still need to use condoms?

Yes, you should still use condoms. Condoms protect against other STIs and prevent pregnancy.

It is essential to use condoms during the time it takes for PrEP to start working in your body. (Remember, it's a minimum of 7 days for men and 21 for women). It is highly recommended that you continue to use condoms even after this period.

### What about other HIV prevention methods?

The Ministry of Health recommends that people taking PrEP should also use other HIV prevention methods in order to further reduce the risk of HIV infection. These include:

- Consistent and correct use of condoms.
- Voluntary medical male circumcision.
- ARVs for HIV-positive sexual partners.
- Treatment for STIs.



## Can I stop using PrEP?

Yes, you can. Starting PrEP does not mean that you will need to take PrEP for the rest of your life. Your risk of HIV infection will vary as your life circumstances change.

If you are no longer at risk of HIV infection, talk to your healthcare provider, about stopping PrEP. It is recommended that you continue to take PrEP for 28 days after your last possible HIV exposure before you stop.



# PrEP to stay safe #PrEPforProtection

If you think that PrEP is the right option  
for you then visit your nearest clinic.

Dial **\*573#** for more information about PrEP and to find the  
location of your nearest clinic or visit  
[www.ZambiaEndingAIDS.org](http://www.ZambiaEndingAIDS.org)

Unless otherwise stated, the appearance of individuals in this product gives no indication  
of either sexuality, or HIV status



Ministry of Health



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

