

# PrEP

## WHAT is PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)?

- It is an HIV prevention method where HIV-negative individuals take HIV medications to reduce their risk of getting HIV infection.
- PrEP involves taking a single pill (called Truvada®) every day, **in combination** with other HIV prevention strategies (eg. consistent condom use, use of sterile needles)
- When taken correctly PrEP has been shown to be safe and effective in reducing the risk of HIV infection.
- PrEP is NOT an HIV cure or vaccine.

## WHAT is Truvada®?

- Truvada® is a blue coloured tablet containing 2 anti-HIV medications:
  - Emtricitabine 200mg
  - Tenofovir 300mg

## How should PrEP therapy be taken?

- The dose is one Truvada® tablet (200 mg emtricitabine and 300 mg tenofovir) by mouth once every day.
- Take Truvada® with or without food.

## Important Administration Notes:

- Take Truvada® as prescribed to ensure it can be as effective and safe as possible.
- Do NOT adjust the dosing regimen on your own
  - Skipping doses can decrease PrEP's effectiveness
  - Taking too much drug increases the risk of side effects and harm.

## What if you FORGET a dose?

- Take it as soon as possible.
- If it is time for your next dose, do NOT double the dose. Just carry on with your regular schedule and consider the forgotten dose as a missed dose.

## Why should you take PrEP consistently every day?

- To ensure there is enough drug in your system to prevent HIV from causing a permanent infection if you are exposed.
- Research shows irregular use of PrEP (such as taking it for only a few days or weeks at a time, repeated stopping and re-starting) can decrease the effectiveness of PrEP.

**It is important you keep your doctor appointments and go for laboratory tests so that your progress can be followed.**

## Before starting/while taking PrEP:

- Inform your healthcare provider of any **health conditions** you have including osteoporosis, kidney disease or liver problems (such as hepatitis B), as well as **all prescription and non-prescription drugs** you are taking. This includes herbal products, over the counter medications, and recreational drugs.
- Certain drugs can increase or decrease the effect of tenofovir and emtricitabine. In such cases, medication adjustments may be needed.
- Due to an increased risk of kidney problems, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen, naproxen, diclofenac, and indomethacin, should be used with caution when taking tenofovir. Use of high-dose or multiple NSAIDs with tenofovir should be avoided.
- Early recognition of acute HIV infection conversion is important. The signs and symptoms of early HIV infection can be similar to other common illnesses, like the flu, and can include:
  - fever, sore throat, headache, muscle/joint pain, swollen lymph nodes, skin rash, mouth ulcers, fatigue, diarrhea, lack of appetite
- If you have any symptoms of acute HIV infection, see your healthcare provider promptly for reassessment.

**What are the ADVERSE EFFECTS of Truvada®? What should you do about them?**

Common side effects:

- stomach upset
- gas/bloating
- nausea
- diarrhea
- dizziness
- fatigue
- headache
- rash

These effects are usually mild and go away within the first month of starting treatment. If these side effects are bothersome and do not go away, please speak with your doctor or pharmacist.

Mild, harmless changes in the colour of the skin may happen on the palms of the hands or soles of the feet.

Less common, but serious, side effects:

- kidney/liver problems
- weakening of the bones

**Required Follow-Up Lab Tests**

- HIV testing should be done at least every 3 months when taking PrEP
- Blood tests to monitor your kidney and liver function should be done regularly
- Testing for sexually transmitted infections is also recommended

**How should this drug be STORED?**

Truvada® should be stored in a cool (15-30°C) dry place protected from light.

- Do NOT store in your bathroom or kitchen because heat and moisture may cause the drug to be less active.

Keep out of the reach of children.

Ensure the drug has not expired by checking the expiry date (“EXP”).

**If you have any questions or concerns about this drug or if you are experiencing adverse effects, please discuss them with your pharmacist, doctor, or nurse.**

References:

Gilead Sciences, Inc. Foster City, CA, USA. Truvada® (emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate). Last revised: December 2013.

Gilead Sciences Canada, Inc. Mississauga, ON. Truvada® (emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate). Last revised: September 5, 2013.

US Public Health Service. Preexposure Prophylaxis for the Prevention of HIV Infection in the United States – 2014 Clinical Practice Guideline.

Tenofovir October 2013 Labeling Updates. <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/SafetyInformation/ucm374513.htm> (Accessed Sept 7, 2015)

**PrEP**  
**(Pre-Exposure  
Prophylaxis)**

**with**

**EMTRICITABINE**  
**+**  
**TENOFOVIR**

**(TRUVADA®)**

**MEDICATION**  
**FACT SHEET**

Prepared by the Ontario HIV Pharmacy Professional Specialty Group, updated October 2015.

Additional medication fact sheets and updates may be found at: [www.hivclinic.ca](http://www.hivclinic.ca)