

## What does taking PrEP involve?:

Taking **Truvada as PrEP** is more than just a pill every day. It also means frequent medical provider visits. Here are a list of things that can serve as a guide:

Before starting:

- Talk about why you're initiating PrEP
- Review potential side effects
- Take an HIV test
- Test for Hepatitis B
- Test for kidney function
- Test for STI's
- If applicable, test if you are pregnant, discuss if you are planning to become pregnant, or are breastfeeding

Every 1 – 3 months following:

- Review potential side effects
- Retest for HIV
- Retest for kidney function
- Retest for STI's
- If applicable, take a pregnancy test

## Stopping PrEP:

Stopping **PrEP** includes testing for HIV and choosing an alternative HIV prevention strategy. If possible, **Truvada** should be continued for 21 – 28 days after your last significant exposure to HIV.

**Truvada** must be discontinued following a potential HIV positive test result.

***So the question is:***

***Is PrEP right for you?***

## References and resources:

### Info about PrEP:

thesexyouwant.ca  
PrEPwatch.org  
WhatisPrEP.org  
Start.truvada.com

### CDC PrEP guide for provider:

cdc.gov/hiv/prevention/research/prep  
catie.ca/en/prep  
skhiv.ca

### Health clinics:

#### Saskatoon Sexual Health - Ph: 306-244-7989

Monday: 1pm - 4pm (drop in)  
Tuesday: 1pm - 4pm (drop in and appointments)  
Wednesday: 6pm - 8pm (drop in and appointments)  
Friday: 9:30am - 12:30pm (appointments)

#### Gens Hellquist Queer Sexual Health Clinic (OUTSaskatoon) - Ph: 306-665-1224

Bi-weekly on Wednesdays: 5pm – 8pm  
(drop in and appointments)  
Thursdays: 5pm – 8 pm (drop in and appointments)  
Second Saturday of every month: PrEP Clinic  
(appointments only)

**Make an appointment online at:**  
**[www.outsaskatoon.ca/clinic](http://www.outsaskatoon.ca/clinic)**

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### Address

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### Contact Us

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## PrEP:

# The Raw Facts

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An OUTSaskatoon Resource

## What is PrEP?

**PrEP** is an HIV prevention strategy in which HIV negative people take anti-HIV medications before coming into contact with HIV to reduce their risk of becoming infected.

**PrEP** differs from **PEP (post exposure prophylaxis)** which is taken within 72 hours after HIV exposure and involves a month long course of taking anti-HIV medications.

### Medication:

**Truvada** is currently the only medication approved by FDA for **PrEP** (since July 2012). **Truvada as PrEP** combines 2 anti-HIV medications (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate) and (emtricitabine) in one pill. A prescription is normally a 30-90 day supply and consists of one tablet/pill daily.

### Effectiveness:

Many studies, including the **iPrEX study**, showed that people who took **Truvada as PrEP** everyday reduced their HIV risk by more than 90%.

The iPrEX study showed that:

- 7 **PrEP** pills per week, HIV negative protection was approximately 99%
- 4 **PrEP** pills per week, HIV negative protection was approximately 96%
- 2 **PrEP** pills per week, HIV negative protection was approximately 76%

If a dose is missed the level of HIV protection decreases. It is important to note that it takes 7 days of taking daily **Truvada as PrEP** to reach high enough concentrations in rectal tissue and 21 days in vaginal tissue to get high enough levels of HIV protection.

## Side effects:

There is a chance of getting mild nausea, headache, and weight loss for the first 4-8 weeks of taking **Truvada as PrEP**. More serious side effects can include decreasing kidney function and bone density issues. They are rare and will cease once the drug is stopped.

- 1 out of 10 will experience nausea
- 1 out of 100 will have bone density issues
- 1 out of 200 will have kidney problems

**Truvada as PrEP** is not known to interact with alcohol, recreation drugs, most medications for mental health conditions, birth control, and is not known to have sexual performance side effects.

### Cost and availability:

As of the beginning of 2018, **Truvada as PrEP** is fully covered. You need to visit a health centre/sexual health care site and see a healthcare worker as **Truvada as PrEP** is available by prescription only.

### How does PrEP work?:

**Truvada as PrEP** works by blocking the enzyme reverse transcriptase. This prevents HIV from making more copies of itself and stops it from establishing an infection in the body.

### Drug resistance:

Before using **Truvada as PrEP** it is vital to confirm you are HIV negative through testing before starting the drug. **PrEP** is not sufficient on its own to treat HIV and when taken on its own by someone who is HIV positive can result in the virus becoming resistance. This may limit HIV treatment - **TasP (treatment as protection)** later.

If you are infected with the Hepatitis B virus and stop taking **PrEP** the Hepatitis may get worse.

## How long can I take PrEP?:

**Truvada as PrEP** can be discontinued whenever the protection is no longer needed. The medication will also be stopped if:

- You are found to be HIV positive.
- You do not do your routine required lab follow-up.
- You develop rare decreased kidney function or experience a decrease in bone density.

### Who should take PrEP?:

If you are HIV negative and answer yes to the following then **Truvada as PrEP** is a strategy to consider:

- Do you use condoms sometimes or not at all?
- Have you had STI's in your butt in the last 6 – 12 months?
- Have you had STI's in your vagina in the last 6 – 12 months?
- Do you bottom? (receive anal)
- Have you taken **PeP (post exposure prophylaxis)** in the last year?
- Are you having anal sex and only using condoms sometimes or not at all?
- Are you having sex with someone whose HIV status you do not know?
- Are you potentially exposed to HIV through injection drug use?
- Have you used stimulants, poppers, cocaine, meth, ecstasy, or GHB in the last 6 months?
- Are you a person with a womb who is trying to safely have a child with a person who is HIV positive?

### Should I still wear condoms?:

Condoms have been and continue to be an effective tool to reduce not only HIV risk but the risk of other STI's. **PrEP offers no protection from other STI's.** The important thing is to find an HIV prevention strategy that fits your sexual health goals and needs.