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COVER



# EXPOSED to HIV?



Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)  
**FACT SHEET**

# EXPOSED to HIV?



## WHAT IS POST EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PEP)?

Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) is a combination of several anti-HIV medications that can be taken after someone is potentially exposed to HIV to prevent HIV infection. **PEP is NOT a “morning-after pill” to prevent HIV, and there is still not a cure for AIDS.** PEP is a combination of two or three anti-HIV medications that **MAY** prevent HIV infection, if taken correctly and within a certain period of time after possible HIV exposure. Available data suggests that PEP can reduce your risk of becoming HIV+ by approximately 80%. However, it is always best to prevent exposure to HIV in the first place by using condoms, not sharing needles, using clean needles, reducing the number of sex partners and asking your partner's HIV status before sex.

### How does PEP work?

It takes several days for HIV infection to become established in the body. PEP drugs stop HIV from multiplying in the body's cells. The cells that are already HIV-infected would then die naturally without making more copies of HIV. If a person who has been exposed to HIV begins PEP treatment quickly (within 72 hours after the exposure), this maximizes the chance of successfully preventing the virus from establishing itself in the body.

### When do I take PEP?

**We think PEP is only effective if taken within 72 hours** after possible exposure to HIV. The sooner you take PEP, the more likely it is that it will prevent you from becoming infected with HIV. If you wait more than 72 hours, you are not eligible for PEP. Research has shown that PEP does not work after 72 hours because HIV infection could already occur. However, you still should get tested for HIV.

### How do I get on a PEP program?

If you have had unprotected sex or shared needles with someone whose HIV status is unknown (but that person is at risk for being HIV infected) **OR** if you have had unprotected sex or shared needles with someone who is HIV+, you may be eligible for PEP. Your health care provider will ask you questions about your recent sexual activity. Also you will need to take an HIV test to make sure that you are not already infected with HIV. If you qualify, you will be prescribed 28 days of anti-HIV medications.

### How do I take PEP?

You must take your PEP medication for 28 days and not miss any doses. If you miss a dose, it increases the risk that the PEP treatment may not work. Remember: no treatment—even PEP taken perfectly—is 100% effective for preventing HIV infection.

### Are there side effects to PEP?

Common side effects include nausea, fatigue, vomiting, headaches and diarrhea. Approximately 40% of people who take PEP experience side effects, however most side effects are mild and most people don't have to change or stop taking their medicines because of side effects.

### What if I might be pregnant?

All female patients of reproductive potential will be tested for pregnancy. If you are breast feeding, discontinue breast feeding immediately and transition to a formula feeding and pump-and-discard program.

### What happens once I finish the 28-day dose?

Once you have completed the course of PEP treatment, test for HIV again at 4-6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months after the risk exposure to make sure you are not infected with HIV. Protect your negative status, and try not to expose yourself to HIV infection again.

If You Think You Need PEP,  
**CALL: 213-351-7699**



# BACK COVER

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**CALL: 213-351-7699**

IF YOU THINK YOU MAY HAVE HAD AN EXPOSURE  
**WITHIN THE LAST 72 HOURS (3 DAYS)**

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR **PEP** (Post Exposure Prophylaxis)

PEP is available for people who have had a high risk exposure to HIV  
(unprotected sex or needle sharing with a partner of unknown HIV status or known HIV+ status.)

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PARTICIPATING SITES:

**The L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center**

1625 N. Schrader Blvd., L.A., CA 90028  
(near Hollywood/West Hollywood)

**CALL: 323-860-5880**

**OASIS Clinic**

1807 E. 120th St., L.A., CA 90059  
(near Downton/Compton)

**CALL: 310-668-5131**



*with generous support from:* Abbott Labs, Gilead Sciences, GlaxoSmithKline and Merck



P-QUAD is a Pilot Project to Operationalize the Prevention Strategy of Post-exposure Prophylaxis following Sexual Exposure to HIV in combination with Educational Programming and Behavioral Risk Reduction Strategies in Los Angeles County