

# Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Patient Information Sheet

## What is PrEP?

- PrEP stands for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, meaning you take a medication before any exposure (sex or needle sharing to decrease the chance of HIV infection)
- PrEP is a strategy used by HIV negative people to reduce their risk of becoming HIV positive
- PrEP will not protect you from any other sexually transmitted infections

## What is PrEP and how should I take it?

- PrEP consists of a single tablet containing 2 medications – Tenofovir DF and Emtricitabine
- Take 1 tablet daily, with or without food
- It will require 7 consecutive days of dosing to reach protective levels in your body against HIV for anal sex, and possibly longer for vaginal sex
- It is recommended to take PrEP every day, regardless of whether you have sex or not, to ensure you continue to be protected (as approved by Health Canada)

## I am starting PrEP, what happens now?

- About 1 month after starting PrEP, your doctor will repeat your blood tests to make sure your body is tolerating the medications
- While you continue taking PrEP, blood tests will be done every three months to monitor you for HIV infection and to check your kidneys. These tests are necessary for ongoing renewals of PrEP
- Routine tests for other sexually transmitted infections are also recommended every three months, as PrEP will not protect you against other infections

## If you decide to stop PrEP:

- You can stop PrEP at any time, but it is recommended to continue for at least 48 hours after last sexual contact before stopping
- Once PrEP is stopped, it is important you complete follow-up testing for HIV 4-6 weeks after stopping
- You can restart PrEP with an updated negative HIV test and a valid PrEP prescription form

## What are side effects of the medications?

- Side effects are generally rare. There is a low risk of nausea, diarrhea, bloating or headaches in the first few weeks, however these side effects usually stop
- Tenofovir may cause mild thinning of the bones, which is reversed if PrEP is stopped. Currently, this is not thought to be a serious concern in healthy individuals, however may be important if you already have bone health problems

## Some rare but potentially serious side effects include:

- Allergic reaction: signs include rash, swelling, difficulty breathing
- Tenofovir can rarely lead to kidney problems. It is recommended your doctor monitors your kidney function

## If you forget to take your medication:

- Take the medication as soon as you remember, unless your next dose is due within the next 6 hours. In this case, resume at your usual time and do not double your dose.

## To reorder PrEP either:

1. Visit St. Paul's Hospital Ambulatory Pharmacy in person with your refill prescription (we will attempt to refill same day but may require up to 24 hours) **OR**
2. If your doctor faxes/emails your refill prescription in advance to PrEP program, you can reorder by phone for pick up at St. Paul's Hospital Pharmacy. Please call: **1-800-547-3622 (selection #5)**
  - Leave a voicemail stating your **full name, date of birth or Personal Health Number and contact information** should we need to reach you.
  - Please allow 3 business days for pickup
3. Patients who pick up from their prescriber's office (outside Greater Vancouver only) please reorder by phone as per option #2 above.
  - Please allow minimum 5 business days to arrive at your prescriber's office
4. All refills must be picked up within 30 days of prescription date

## St. Paul's Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy Hours:

**Mon, Thur, Fri – 7:30am to 4:30pm**  
**Tues, Wed – 7:30am to 7:30pm**  
**Closed Weekends and Holidays**