

HIV POST EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PEP)

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

What is my risk of acquiring HIV?

The risk of acquiring HIV following a skin puncture with HIV-infected blood is about 0.3% (3 in 1000). The risk of acquiring HIV after unprotected sex with a known HIV positive person can be up to 3% (3 in 100), but it depends on a lot of things including the type of sex and how infectious the HIV positive person is.

Can anything be done to reduce this risk?

After HIV gets into the body, it takes a few days for the infection to get established. We can use this window to give you anti-HIV medication to reduce the risk of the virus taking hold. This is called 'Post-Exposure Prophylaxis', or PEP for short, as it is trying to prevent infection after you have been exposed.

There are clear guidelines in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) about when to prescribe PEP. The medication itself has side-effects and can make you unwell. It is only worth prescribing this medication if the risk of HIV infection is high. You will need to tell the staff looking after you some basic facts about your exposure so they can accurately assess your risk of contracting HIV.

What is the treatment?

From December 2012 NHSGGC has changed what drugs we give people to try and prevent HIV infection. The new drugs have less side-effects. We need to give three active agents to combat HIV, but two of these are combined into a single tablet.

Drug	Dose	Notes
Truvada ® This is made up of two drugs combined into ONE tablet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenofovir (245 mg) • Emtricitabine (200 mg) 	Take ONE tablet, ONCE a day, preferably every 24 hours	Take with or just after food or a meal.
Raltegravir 400mg (also called Isentress ®)	Take ONE tablet, TWICE a day, preferably every 12 hours	It does not matter if you take these tablets before or after food or on an empty stomach
Truvada and Raltegravir can be taken at the same time.		

When should it be started?

The quicker PEP is started after exposure the better – within hours. The longer the wait the more chance it won't work. After 72 hours PEP isn't given because it won't work.

How long is therapy for?

PEP treatment is given for **28** days. Initially you will be given a **FIVE** day supply of the medication. You will be seen for follow-up by a specialist at a Sandyford service or at the Brownlee Centre, Gartnavel General Hospital before this runs out. If the specialist recommends that you continue on PEP, a further **23-day** supply will be arranged for you from Gartnavel General Hospital Pharmacy. It is important that you take all of your medication as directed.

Does PEP have side effects?

The newer HIV treatments we now use have less side-effects than previously. Common nuisance side effects include flatulence (passing wind) and nausea (feeling sick). These do not usually require extra treatments. More serious side effects include:

- **Skin rash:** If you notice a rash you MUST contact the clinic you are attending for follow-up. If this is closed you should contact NHS24. Do NOT take further doses of your PEP treatment until you have been assessed.
- **Kidney problems:** One of the agents in Truvada can affect the way your kidneys work. You will have tests to make sure your kidneys are working normally when you start treatment and after two weeks.
- **Mood change & sleep disturbance:** Raltegravir can rarely cause problems sleeping and mood changes. If you feel the tablets are affecting you in this way you must discuss this with the doctor who prescribed your PEP.

If you experience any unexplained symptoms during your treatment please contact the pharmacist or clinic you are attending for follow-up (see Further Information section).

What about other medical conditions and medications?

It is important that you tell us about any medical conditions you have and particularly any prescribed medication you are taking. **Kidney or liver problems, Hepatitis B, previous pancreatitis, stomach conditions and TB treatment** are very important to know about as these conditions might affect the way in which PEP is prescribed or monitored.

It is ESSENTIAL that any medicine, supplement, herbal remedy or recreational drug use is disclosed to the doctor prescribing your PEP.

Pregnancy and contraception

- If you think you might be pregnant, tell your doctor as this may influence the frequency of blood tests while receiving PEP.
- Truvada/Raltegravir PEP will not affect your contraception method, but you should use male or female condoms to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV until you are clear of the window period and have a negative HIV test.

After completing the course – will I be HIV negative?

PEP does not always prevent HIV infection. It can fail because some anti-HIV drugs don't work against some strains of HIV and it's more likely to fail if it's not taken properly or soon enough. It is very important that you attend for any recommended follow-up for HIV testing, and testing for other infections as needed. Please report any unexpected symptoms, particularly fever or rash to your doctor or pharmacist.

Further Information

If you have any questions about this medication please contact the HIV specialist pharmacists at Gartnavel General Hospital

Gartnavel General Pharmacy – 0141 211 3383/3317/3322 9am to 5pm Mon – Fri and 9am to 12 noon on a Saturday morning (ask for an HIV pharmacist).

Sexual Health Advisors, Sandyford – 0141 211 8634

www.sandyford.org.uk
www.pepscotland.org