

Will PEP stop HIV transmission?

PEP does not always prevent HIV transmission, but will significantly reduce the chances of this happening. It has the best chance of working if:

- It is started very soon after exposure - preferably within 4 hours, but it must be started within 72 hours.
- You complete the four-week course of treatment.

Is PEP a cure for HIV?

No, as yet there is no cure for HIV.

How to avoid HIV transmission

- Always using condoms for sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal or oral).
- Never share needles, syringes, water or other paraphernalia if you use or inject drugs. Use fresh and clean equipment every time you inject, and use appropriate disposal containers for used equipment.
- PrEP (Pre Exposure Prophylaxis) for HIV is available free from Grampian Sexual Health Service.

This is medication which protects against HIV transmission when taken prior to a potential exposure.

For more information on PrEP visit:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/hiv-prep-pre-exposure-prophylaxis/>

Free condoms

Find where you can get free condoms in Grampian by scanning the QR code.:



or email:

gram.freecondoms@nhs.scot

/ call **08085 20203** for free condoms by post.

Injecting equipment providers

A full list of Injecting Equipment Providers in Grampian is available at:

- <https://www.needleexchange.scot>

Where can I get more information about HIV and PEP?

- <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/immune-system/hiv/>
- <https://www.waverleycare.org/>

Local support

- <https://ourpositivevoice.org/>
- <https://www.fourpillarsuk.org>

Cover design based on original artwork: Copyright © 2022
Fast Track Cities, London

This publication is also available in other formats and languages on request.

Please call NHS Grampian on
01224 551116 or email:
gram.communications@nhs.scot

Ask for publication MVC 240215
ZA04087 (Version 3)

HIV

Think you might have
been at risk?



PEP

(Post Exposure Prophylaxis)

Will reduce your risk of HIV
infection after you have been
exposed to the virus.



What is PEP?

- PEP is a four-week course of tablet medication which is effective against HIV infection.
- It needs to be started as soon as you think have been exposed to the virus.
- It is important not to miss any doses for the medication to have the best chance of working.
- For the medication to be most effective, it must be given as soon as possible after a potential exposure and always within 72 hours.

When should I ask for PEP?

- You can ask for PEP if you think you have been exposed to HIV.
- You need to ask for PEP as soon as possible after exposure to HIV.
- Call 111 for advice.

What might put you at risk?

Sexual exposure:

- Having sex without using a condom, or where the condom breaks - if your sexual partner is:
- Known to be living with HIV with a detectable viral load.
- A man who has sex with men.
- From a country or lives/works in a country with high HIV prevalence.
- A person who injects drugs (now or in the past).
- Following sexual assault.

Other types of exposure

- Sharing needles, syringes and other injecting equipment.
- Skin puncture with needles or other sharp instruments that have come into contact with another person's blood.
- Other exposure to blood such as blood splashes or bites.



Where can I get PEP?

- Aboyne Hospital Minor Injury Unit
- Chalmers Hospital Minor Injuries Unit
- Emergency Department, Aberdeen Royal Infirmary
- Emergency Department, Dr Gray's Hospital, Elgin
- Fraserburgh Hospital Minor Injuries Unit
- GMED Pharmacy Store, Green Zone, Health Village, Frederick Street, Aberdeen
- Infection Unit (Ward 111), Aberdeen Royal Infirmary
- Jubilee Hospital Minor Injuries Unit
- Peterhead Hospital Minor Injuries Unit
- Sexual Health Service, Health Village, Frederick Street, Aberdeen



What will happen when I ask for PEP?

- PEP is not an appropriate treatment for everyone - clinical staff will need to ask you some questions and run some tests to decide whether it's right for you.
- You will be asked why you think you may be at risk.
- You will be asked to be tested for HIV, Hepatitis B, C and possibly other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Clinical staff will use this information and follow professional guidelines to decide whether PEP is right for you.

Are there any side effects?

- If you are prescribed PEP the side effects will be discussed with you.
- Side effects may include:
Nausea, diarrhoea, headaches, tiredness.
- Some of the side effects can be lessened by taking other medication which will be prescribed if needed.