

DOES HOWARD BROWN HEALTH CENTER OFFER PrEP?

Yes. HBHC offers PrEP to patients in our primary care clinics. Staff are available to help patients make an appointment to see a healthcare provider for PrEP. Patients without insurance may qualify for low-cost services, and staff will be available to help you figure out how to pay for the medication.

For additional information or to make an appointment, call 773.388.1600 or walk in during our hours of operation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Howard Brown Health Center:
773.388.1600
howardbrown.org/PrEP

TTY/TTD: 1.800.782.0423
TPAN Needle Exchange: 773.989.9400
CDC PrEP 101:
cdc.gov/hiv/basics/prep.html

Definitions of Terms Used in this Brochure

Co-pay: Short for "co-payment." This term is used when your insurance pays for part of your medical care, and you pay for the rest. The amount you're responsible for paying is your co-pay.

Emergency Contraception: Birth control that is taken after sex to try to stop pregnancy from occurring. Often known as the "morning after pill."

Needle Exchange: A program where injection drug users can turn in their used needles/syringes and get new clean needles/syringes.

Prophylaxis: Treatment to stop a disease, in this case a drug to stop HIV infection.

DOES PrEP HAVE SIDE EFFECTS?

Side effects associated with taking Truvada for PrEP are typically very mild, if present at all. Side effects may include upset stomach, headaches, nausea, and dizziness. Patients who experience these side effects often experience them for only a short time while the body adjusts to the medication.

More serious side effects are extremely rare, and may include liver toxicity, renal impairment, and lactic acidosis. Discuss serious side effects with your provider before starting PrEP.

Currently, only Truvada is approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use as PrEP. However, additional medications may be approved as PrEP in the future. If taking a medication other than Truvada as PrEP, you and your provider should discuss side effects associated with that medication.

Tell your provider right away if you experience side effects that make it difficult to take the medication. Do not stop taking PrEP before talking to your provider; there may be ways to make you feel better, or alleviate side effects.

Most patients have no or very few side effects with PrEP. Most of those who do experience side effects decide to continue taking PrEP because they want to do everything possible to avoid getting HIV. The choice is ultimately yours, but should be discussed with your provider to keep you as healthy as possible.

HOW MUCH DOES PrEP COST? HOW CAN I PAY FOR IT?

PrEP is covered by Medicaid and most private insurance plans. Co-pay assistance is available, and many patients with insurance pay nothing out of pocket. If you need help or do not have insurance, ask about patient assistance programs which may pay for the full cost of the medication. Low-income patients may qualify.

CAN I TAKE PrEP IF I'M PREGNANT?

Yes. If you are pregnant, you can still take PrEP. Your provider will want to discuss the benefits and risks to you and your baby.

If you are nursing, you should not breast feed while at increased risk of acquiring HIV. HIV can be transmitted through breast milk, so your HIV status should be verified before you resume breast feeding. Ask your provider about pumping and discarding breast milk if you wish to go back to breast-feeding after taking PrEP on a temporary basis.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DECIDE TO STOP TAKING PrEP?

Your provider will want to verify that you are still HIV-negative. This means your provider may ask you to be tested 1 month and 3 months after stopping PrEP. You may be offered additional services, such as HIV/STI prevention education, recovery services, needle exchange services, or counseling. If you need these services but they have not been offered, ask your provider for a referral.



PUT PrEP IN YOUR STEP!
HBHC CAN HELP!

STAY HIV NEGATIVE!

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WHAT IS PrEP?

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is a one-pill once daily medication that can reduce your risk of acquiring HIV. If you take PrEP as directed, it can prevent HIV from infecting your body. PrEP must be taken consistently and correctly to maximize the chance it will work. This means taking the correct amount of medication each day at the same time, without missing any doses.

WHO CAN TAKE PrEP?

PrEP can be taken by any HIV-negative person who wants to reduce their chance of acquiring HIV. Your healthcare provider must believe you are healthy enough to take PrEP and agree to prescribe it for you. PrEP is recommended for anyone who might be more likely to acquire HIV.

This can include HIV-negative people who are dating or having sex with HIV-positive people, people who do not use condoms consistently or correctly with partners of unknown HIV status, anyone who shares needles for injection drug use, hormone injection, or tattooing and piercing, and anyone who is sexually active with multiple partners in a community where HIV infection rates are high (this includes Chicago).

WHERE CAN I GET PrEP?

Any healthcare provider can prescribe PrEP at their discretion. However, it's recommended that you see a provider with whom you feel comfortable discussing topics like sex, sexuality, drug use, needle sharing, and HIV. PrEP is a prescription medication, and must be prescribed to you by a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT WHEN I ASK FOR PrEP?

A healthcare provider will want to discuss your risk of acquiring HIV, including your sexual activity and/or needle sharing activities. This is to evaluate whether PrEP will be safe, effective, and necessary in your situation.

You will be asked to test for HIV. A healthcare provider must verify that you are currently HIV-negative before prescribing PrEP. If your test is positive (indicating that you have already been infected with HIV), the provider will discuss making a treatment plan with you. If you refuse HIV testing, you may be unable to receive PrEP.

You may be asked to discuss alternative methods to reduce your chance of acquiring HIV. This may include increasing condom use, reducing the number of partners, and reducing needle sharing.

Your healthcare provider may wish to plan ways to reduce your risk of acquiring HIV by as much as possible – and this may or may not include PrEP.

You may be offered additional testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and/or Hepatitis B.

You may be offered vaccines against other diseases, such as Hepatitis A and B.

If you can become pregnant, you may be offered a pregnancy test. Your provider may discuss emergency contraception, prenatal care, and/or pregnancy planning depending on your needs.

Your provider will want to run additional tests to confirm that you are healthy enough to take PrEP. These may include tests of your liver and kidney function.

If you believe you have recently been exposed to HIV, your provider may want to discuss post exposure prophylaxis (PEP), a month-long medication regimen that can prevent an infection that would otherwise occur. Once your HIV-negative status has been assured, your provider may then re-visit the topic of starting PrEP with you.

Once you have started PrEP, your provider may wish to schedule a 1-month follow-up appointment to verify that you are still HIV-negative, and that your liver and kidney function have not been affected by the medication.

HOW WILL I TAKE PrEP?

If the healthcare provider decides to prescribe PrEP to you, the medication will be explained in detail at the time of your visit. You will be asked to fill the prescription and take the medication as directed.

Once you begin taking PrEP, it is important to continue taking the medication as directed. Stopping or skipping doses will reduce the protection offered by PrEP, or might leave you completely unprotected. If you are considering stopping PrEP, you should discuss it with your healthcare provider first.

PrEP may not work correctly if taken in combination with certain medications. Before starting PrEP, be certain to discuss any medications you're taking with your healthcare provider and the pharmacist filling your prescription. Be sure to discuss any over-the-counter drugs, herbal medicines, and vitamins you're taking. You should only stop taking PrEP if your healthcare provider instructs you to do so. PrEP will not provide you with protection if you don't take it.

