

## SHOULD YOU TAKE LONG-ACTING PrEP?

Cabotegravir is a medication that can help you stay HIV-negative. Here is what you need to know.

### WHAT IS PrEP?

PrEP, which stands for pre-exposure prophylaxis, is a medication approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for daily use to help people stay HIV-negative. Take PrEP before you are exposed to HIV infection.

The pill is called Truvada®, a two-drug combination in one pill, and it is taken once a day.

The long-acting injection, called Apretude®, was approved by the FDA in 2021. The injection is administered by a healthcare provider every other month.

You can obtain the prescription from licensed providers (MD, DNP, or Pharmacists\*).

\*As determined by your state, please verify by contacting your local pharmacy

### HOW DOES PrEP WORK?

PrEP prevents HIV from spreading in your body.

If you are exposed to bodily fluids — semen, blood, or vaginal fluids — of someone with HIV, having PrEP in your bloodstream blocks the pathways leading to infection.

### IS PrEP EFFECTIVE?

Yes. PrEP is more than 90% effective when taken consistently, according to the CDC.

PrEP works best when combined with other safer sex practices (condom use and HIV/STI testing) to decrease your HIV risk significantly.

Talk to your healthcare provider about other ways to reduce the risk of infection.

## HOW DO I KNOW IF LONG-ACTING PrEP IS RIGHT FOR ME?

People use PrEP to remain HIV-negative for a variety of reasons.

You should talk with your healthcare provider about long-acting PrEP if any of the following apply to you:

- You have multiple sexual partners;
- Your primary sexual partner(s) is HIV-positive;
- You have condomless sex, especially with a partner who is HIV-positive or whose status you don't know;
- You have been treated for an STI;
- You or your sexual partner(s) use injection drugs;
- You have taken PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) more than once in the past year;
- Your sexual partner(s) refuses to use condoms during sex, or you find it challenging to use condoms consistently; or
- You or your sexual partner(s) engage in commercial sex work or the exchange of sex for money, drugs, housing, or other assistance.
- You have difficulty taking medications daily or have forgotten to take your oral PrEP medication.

## HOW DO I GET LONG-ACTING PrEP?

Work with your healthcare provider to start a long-acting PrEP routine.

If you decide long-acting PrEP is right for you, you'll meet with a healthcare provider to screen you for the medication, including giving you an HIV test and tests for hepatitis B, kidney function, and STIs.

If it's a good fit, you'll receive a prescription.

You will initially be given an injection into the muscle of your buttock 1 time every month for the first 2 months, then as an injection 1 time every 2 months.

You and your healthcare provider will choose 1 day every other month for your injection—your Target Appointment Date.

## WHAT IF I MISS MY TARGET APPOINTMENT DATE?

You have a window in which you may reschedule the appointment. **You have from 7 days before to 7 days after your Target Appointment Date.**

Contact your healthcare provider immediately to set up a new appointment within your Flexible Appointment Window and talk about your options.

## WHAT IF I MISS MY 7-DAY WINDOW?

Missing your Target Appointment Date for more than seven days will require 2 months of daily oral pills called VOCABRIA®. They contain the same active ingredient as the long-acting PrEP.

If you choose to restart your Cabotegravir injections, your healthcare provider will determine whether it's right for you.

**Remember, attending every long-acting PrEP appointment is crucial to help you stay continuously protected from HIV.**

This follow-up care is vital as it will include blood tests, HIV and STI screenings, assessment of any side effects, discussion of HIV risks, an assessment of your experience with the medication and a prescription refill.

## HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

The amount you pay for long-acting PrEP will depend on your health insurance and the specifics of your insurance plan.

If you don't have health insurance, there are opportunities through Medicaid, ViiV (who makes the long-acting PrEP), and other agencies to get you long-acting PrEP.

Eligible patients may pay **as little as a \$0 copay per fill**. Learn more at:

[www.apretudecopayprogram.com](http://www.apretudecopayprogram.com).

The ViiVConnect website for patients is available to determine your insurance coverage and if you're eligible for programs that may help lower your out-of-pocket costs.

[www.viivconnect.com/for-patients](http://www.viivconnect.com/for-patients)

## IS THERE ANY REASON NOT TO USE LONG-ACTING PrEP?

Long-acting PrEP can be highly effective at preventing HIV, but there are a few reasons why it might not be right for you.

You should not use long-acting PrEP if any of the following apply to you:

- You are HIV-positive or show symptoms of HIV infection;
- You are allergic to cabotegravir
- You do not have access to regular HIV/STI testing and prevention counseling;
- You do not plan to take the medication consistently; or
- You have liver disease.
- You are taking certain medicines: carbamazepine; oxcarbazepine; phenobarbital; phenytoin; rifampin; or rifapentine.
- You have buttock implants or fillers.

## CAN PrEP REPLACE CONDOMS?

No.

PrEP is an additional level of protection against HIV.

The FDA recommends using PrEP with condoms to maximize your protection against HIV and other STIs. However, PrEP can help lower your risk of contracting HIV even when you don't use a condom, and PrEP does not protect you against other STIs, such as Hepatitis C.

## ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

People who take long-acting PrEP have reported experiencing side effects, such as:

Injection Site: Pain, tenderness, hardened mass or lump, abscess, discoloration, swelling, bruising, redness, itching, warmth, and loss of sensation.

Overall: Diarrhea, headache, fever, tiredness, sleep problems, nausea, or dizziness.

You can talk with your healthcare provider about what side effects you can expect and what to do about them.

### **CAN I TAKE LONG-ACTING PrEP IF I HAVE HAD BUTTOCK IMPLANTS OR FILLERS?**

No, but please contact your healthcare provider. Because this medication is delivered into the muscle of each side of your buttocks, it is not recommended that patients with implants or fillers receive these injections.

### **CAN I TAKE LONG-ACTING PrEP IF I WANT TO GET PREGNANT OR BREASTFEED?**

Since long-acting PrEP remains in your body for up to 12 months after your last injection, it is unknown if it will harm your unborn child.

Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while receiving the injections.

It is unknown if Cabotegravir can pass to your baby in breast milk.

Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby while receiving long-acting PrEP.

### **CAN I CONTINUE TAKING HORMONE REPLACEMENTS OR BIRTH CONTROL WHILE I'M ON LONG-ACTING PrEP?**

Yes. Long-acting PrEP does not interfere with HRT or birth control.

### **I'M READY TO TRY LONG-ACTING PrEP. CAN YOU HELP ME?**

Yes! Please go to [www.aahivm.org](http://www.aahivm.org) to find a clinician that can assist you.

AAHIVM offers [Referral Link](#) to help locate providers according to specialty, focus, insurance, location, practice information and patient population.