HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)

Information sheet – June 2026

Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) is a course of medication taken to reduce the chance of becoming HIV positive after a potential exposure to HIV. Studies have shown that there may be a window of opportunity in the first few hours to days after exposure to HIV where PEP medications can lessen the risk of HIV infection.

The earlier PEP is started the more effective it may be in preventing HIV. PEP needs to be started within 72 hours of the exposure and taken for 28 days (1 month). PEP is not known to be effective if started after 72 hours (3 days).

PEP is used in the community setting for exposures arising mainly from sexual contact and injecting drug use. Whilst it may help to reduce HIV transmission it does not replace the need for safe sexual and injecting practices.

What medication will you be given?

You have been prescribed one of the Starter Packs listed below based on clinical assessment of your risk of acquiring HIV. Each Starter Pack provides 3 days' supply of PEP. **You will need to make an appointment to get further supplies as the medication must be continued for a total of 4 weeks.**

Starter pack	Generic drug names	Trade names	You were given (please tick)
A	Tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300mg/emtricitabine 200mg	Tenofovir/Emtricitabine 300/200 APX®	
B	Tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300mg/emtricitabine 200mg + raltegravir 600mg	Tenofovir/Emtricitabine 300/200 APX® + Raltegravir (Isentress HD®) 600mg	

Important information

- Take the medication exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Do not take it more often or all at once. These drugs work together to prevent the virus spreading.
- Avoid missing any doses as the medications are most effective when there is a constant amount in the blood.
- Complete the full course as prescribed.
- Do not stop taking this medication without checking with your doctor first.
- PEP medication may interact with other medications or recreational drugs you are taking. It is important that your doctor is aware of all the medications you currently take. Some common interactions are described over the page.
- These medications are not available from your local community pharmacy, and you will need to have your medication dispensed from a public hospital pharmacy. At the pharmacy, you will be required to register as a patient of the hospital so that your medication can be dispensed. You will be required to make the standard dispensing co-payment for your medication.

Drug	Side Effects	Other Medical Conditions	Drug Interactions
Tenofovir/Emtricitabine 300/200 APX® Tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300mg/emtricitabine 200mg **Dosage:** One (1) tablet once daily as directed	More common - abdominal pain, headache, decreased weight. Less common - fatigue, diarrhoea, nausea, headaches, dizziness, depression, abnormal dreams, rash.	Inform your doctor if any of the following apply • existing liver problems including hepatitis B or C; • existing kidney problems; • existing bone abnormalities or bone difficulties; • you are pregnant, breastfeeding or plan to become pregnant; or • you are allergic to foods, dyes, preservatives or any other medicines.	Inform your doctor if you are taking: • any other medicines, including medicines or supplements you bought without a prescription; or • didanosine (also known as ddI or Videx). • Ledipasvir with sofosbuvir (Harvoni®)
Raltegravir (Isentress HD®) 600mg **Dosage:** Two (2) tablets once daily as directed	More common - insomnia, headache, dizziness, nausea and fatigue. Less common – fever, creatine phosphokinase (CPK) elevation, depression, abnormal liver function, stomach area pain, vomiting.	Inform your doctor if any of the following apply: • existing liver problems including hepatitis B or C; • a history of a muscle disorder called rhabdomyolysis or myopathy; • increased levels of creatine kinase in your blood; • if you have phenylketonuria (PKU); • you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant; or • you are allergic to foods, dyes, preservatives or any other medicines.	Inform your doctor if you are taking: • any other medicines, including medicines or supplements you bought without a prescription; or • Rifadin or rimycin (used to treat tuberculosis); or • Phenytoin and phenobarbitone (used to treat seizures).

Please ensure you access your nearest Sexual Health Clinic or GP for review and further assessment.