KNOW ABOUT PrEP
(Pre Exposure Prophylaxis)
PREVENT HIV

SCOTLAND EDITION
PrEP stands for pre exposure prophylaxis.
Not everyone can or will want to use PrEP.
But it’s important we all know about it – including people with HIV.
PrEP is becoming increasingly available and used around the world.

PrEP is a pill that can stop the person taking it from getting HIV.

- It’s taken BEFORE sex (PRE).
- It’s different from PEP (post exposure prophylaxis) – which is taken AFTER an HIV exposure (POST).
- The drugs used in PrEP include some of the same ones used to treat people who have HIV.
PrEP offers a new option to reduce HIV rates, which remain high.

- Condoms have been very effective in preventing tens of thousands of HIV infections.
- But HIV rates have remained relatively stable.
- If PrEP is targeted to the people who need it the most, it has the potential to significantly reduce HIV in individuals and across the population.
Research shows that PrEP is very effective at preventing HIV. These studies have tested PrEP in ‘real world’ situations. In research where PrEP didn't work, it was usually because participants didn’t or weren’t able to take it as prescribed. Very few people who use PrEP encounter side effects – mostly headaches or feeling sick and this usually goes away over time.
PrEP is for HIV negative people who are at high risk of getting HIV.

- PrEP can only be used by people who don’t already have HIV.
- Not everyone will want to use PrEP or benefit from it.
- PrEP will most benefit people who are at high risk of HIV.
- In the UK this includes people who have sex in networks with higher rates of HIV like gay and bisexual men and people from African communities.
- It might also include people who have less control over their sex lives (including some sex workers).
NHS Scotland PrEP Eligibility Criteria

Are you:
- Aged 16 or over?
- Able to attend for regular 3 month reviews?
- Willing to stop taking PrEP when no longer eligible?

And do you:
- Have a confirmed HIV negative test in a sexual health clinic?

PrEP is probably not an option for you on the NHS. You should still speak to a charity or sexual health clinic to discuss other HIV protection and sexual wellbeing options that may better suit you.

Are any of your current sexual partners HIV positive and have a detectable viral load?

PrEP may be an option for you. Contact your local sexual health clinic where a doctor will carry out an assessment.

Are you a transgender woman, a gay or bisexual man, or a man who has sex with men?

Have you had a documented bacterial rectal sexually transmitted infection in the last 12 months?

Have you had condomless penetrative anal sex with two or more partners in the last 12 months and likely to do so again in the next three months?

Are there other factors that you believe place you at a high risk of HIV?

Have a confirmed HIV negative test in a sexual health clinic?
Taking PrEP involves taking pills (usually daily) and regular HIV & STI tests.

- Most people who use PrEP take a pill every day.
- Cis men – who know ahead of when they are going to have sex – can use PrEP for short periods of time around episodes of sex. But, there’s currently not enough research to show if this way of taking PrEP works for women and trans people.
- It’s important to have regular HIV and STI (sexually transmitted infection) tests when using PrEP.
- The only other regular test that is needed is a simple kidney function test.
PrEP stops the virus from replicating and reproducing inside the body.

It’s important for the person using PrEP to have taken the pills in enough time BEFORE sex.

This is to ensure that the drug has reached levels that are sufficient to be protective.
PrEP only prevents HIV. Condoms prevent other STIs.

- PrEP only prevents HIV and not other STIs or pregnancy.
- Condoms plus water-based lube can help prevent other STIs. Other forms of contraception (like the pill) are needed to prevent pregnancy.
- Research shows that people who do not already use condoms consistently are the most likely people to be interested in PrEP.
- Regular STI testing will be important to help diagnose and treat STIs.
PrEP is currently available from NHS sexual health clinics in Scotland.

Not everyone will meet the NHS eligibility criteria. It is important that you talk to a sexual health clinician to find if PrEP is right for you.

To find out more about accessing PrEP through the NHS in Scotland, go to www.prep.scot

Some people might not be eligible for PrEP on the NHS in Scotland, or might want to buy PrEP privately. HIV prevention campaigners have worked to ensure that generic PrEP bought online is genuine.

See www.prepster.info and www.iwantpreppnow.co.uk for more information on buying generic PrEP.
Different tools work for different people at different times. Choose what works best for you.

Undetectable = Untransmittable

There is now evidence that the risk of HIV transmission from a person living with HIV who is on treatment and has an undetectable viral load is extremely low.

When a person has achieved an undetectable viral load for at least 6 months, the virus cannot be passed on.

For this reason, PrEP is not recommended for people who are in exclusive relationships with someone who has HIV with an undetectable viral load, as in those instances PrEP would provide no additional benefit.

In Scotland 93% of people who have been diagnosed with HIV are on treatment, and of them 94% have achieved an undetectable viral load.
Developing HIV Literacy is a CSO-funded project, run by Dr Ingrid Young (University of Edinburgh) to understand and better support HIV literacy. This booklet was developed in collaboration with HIV Scotland and PrEPster.

@HIVScotland  
@dev_HIVliteracy  
@TeamPrepster

It's important that all of the groups of people who might benefit from PrEP get to know about it. One of the best ways of educating yourself or others about PrEP is by talking to friends, lovers and sexual partners about it. See www.prepster.info

Is PrEP right for me?  
Find out more from www.prep.scot

Who made this booklet?

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HIV Scotland  
Promoting positive change  
The University of Edinburgh  
University of Glasgow  
Prepster

Find out more about PrEP at www.prep.scot