

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

HIV post-exposure prophylaxis

Medicine information

You are being offered post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) medications because you are likely to be at risk of recent exposure to the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This sheet gives you more information about the medicines and their possible side-effects.

If there is any risk that you could be pregnant, please advise the doctor before taking any of this medication.

General information:

- PEP should be started as soon as possible, but always within 72 hours of possible contact with the virus.
- Starting PEP as early as possible, taking every dose as prescribed and completing the 28-day course, provides the best protection against infection. PEP does not reduce the risk of HIV infection to zero, and this is one of the reasons why you will be given appointments for check-ups during and after the PEP course.
- You will need to make arrangements to attend the Integrated Sexual Health Services (My Sexual Health) at King's Mill Hospital as soon as possible. Telephone 01623 672260 (automated system) select option 2 for an appointment for follow-up

Medicines contained in this pack

- The PEP treatment consists of a 28-day course of two tablets taken together, containing three active medicines.
- All three are antiviral medicines, which are effective against the HIV virus. Used together, there is evidence they can reduce the risk of developing HIV infection following recent exposure.
- The names of the tablets are:
 - **Emtricitabine / tenofovir disoproxil**

Each tablet contains two medicines: emtricitabine 200 mg and tenofovir disoproxil 245 mg. This medicine combination interferes with the normal working of an enzyme that is essential for HIV to reproduce.

- **Isentress[®] (Raltegravir)**

Each tablet contains raltegravir 600mg. This medicine inhibits the enzyme HIV integrase, which stops the virus from multiplying in the cells. The medicine aims to reduce the amount of HIV in the blood.

Taking your medicines:

- For this treatment to be effective, it is important all the medication doses are taken at the right time and in the right way.
- Treatment should start as soon as possible after the potential exposure to HIV.
- Swallow the tablets whole with plenty of water while sitting or standing in an upright position. It is important they are not chewed or crushed. Emtricitabine / tenofovir disoproxil can be dissolved in water, grape or orange juice if you find this easier.
- Take ONE tablet of emtricitabine / tenofovir disoproxil ONCE a day at exactly the same time every day, preferably with a light snack, although this is not essential.
- Take TWO tablets of Isentress® (raltegravir) ONCE a day at the same time each day; this can be taken with or without food. Taking the medicines at the same time each day is extremely important if they are to be as effective as possible.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as possible and then continue as before. If you have difficulty remembering to take them, use an alarm, e.g. on your mobile phone. Integrated Sexual Health services may be able to offer advice to help you remember your doses if you are having trouble with this.
- You may drink moderate amounts of alcohol while taking these medicines (within normal recommended safe limits).

Possible side-effects:

- Common side-effects of the medicines are: nausea (feeling sick), diarrhoea, dyspepsia (indigestion), headache, tiredness, weakness, and muscle aches. These usually settle if you keep taking the medicines as directed. Simple pain relief for headaches or muscle aches may help.
- Serious side-effects are rare. They include allergic reactions, kidney and liver toxicity, and reduced production of red blood cells (causing anaemia) or white blood cells (making you prone to infections). Blood tests will be taken regularly to check blood counts and kidney, liver or other problems. Tell your doctor if you are concerned about any new symptoms.

Please inform your doctor if a severe rash is accompanied by fever, muscle aches, mouth ulceration, conjunctivitis or lethargy as PEP may require discontinuation.

Other medicines and medical conditions:

- With this treatment, there is a risk of problems developing if you are taking other medication or if you have other medical conditions (e.g. kidney or liver problems).
- You must tell your doctor about any medical problems you have, and about any medication you are taking, whether these are prescribed for you or bought over the counter.
- Do not start any new medication without discussing it with your doctor first. If you do start taking any new medication, ensure that the doctor is aware that you are taking these tablets. Integrated Sexual Health services may be able to help if you have any medication queries.

- Some of the medications that are known to interact with these anti-HIV medicines include rifampicin (used for treating bacterial infections), calcium, iron, zinc, magnesium and aluminium (which can be found in indigestion remedies). Some medicines, vitamins and mineral tablets can stop you from absorbing raltegravir properly; supplements, indigestion remedies or multivitamins containing these should ideally not be taken.

Pregnancy and breast-feeding:

- You must tell your doctor if you could be pregnant. You should take precautions (barrier method of contraception such as a condom) to avoid becoming pregnant or fathering a child while taking the medicines.
- Anti-HIV medicines are used frequently in pregnancy but if you think/know you are pregnant or are breastfeeding please tell the doctor who will discuss the safety of PEP in these circumstances.

Other information:

- Do not take more than the recommended dose.
- Do not give your medicines to others.
- Keep your medicines in a cool, dark, dry place, out of the reach of children.
- While you are being treated and until you have received the results of an HIV test, you should use condoms at all times with any sexual partners. You should not donate blood during this time and avoid sharing toothbrushes and razors.

Contact details

Integrated Sexual Health Services
Telephone: 01623 672260
(automated system) select option 4 to speak with a health advisor.

You can also contact the Terence Higgins Trust for more information
Telephone: 0808 802 1221

Useful website:

<https://www.tht.org.uk/hiv-and-sexual-health/pep-post-exposure-prophylaxis-hiv>

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions
Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222
Newark Hospital: 01636 685692
Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references for this leaflet (if relevant) please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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