

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 acquiring Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) due to potential recent exposure to the virus.

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 (ideally within 24 hours) and up to 72 hours after potential contact with the virus.
- Starting PEP as early as possible, taking every dose as prescribed and completing the 28-day course will provide 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 or after the PEP course.
- You will need to make arrangements to attend the Sexual Health Services Nottingham and Nottinghamshire as soon as possible. Telephone **0300 131 7010** to make an appointment for follow-up.

Medicines contained in this pack:

- The PEP treatment is a combination of three anti-HIV medicines given as an emtricitabine / tenofovir disoproxil tablet and a raltegravir tablet to be taken together over a 28-day course.
- The pack contain 30 days' supply of medication and the remaining two days' supply can be returned to any pharmacy for safe disposal.
- These 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:
 - **Emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil**
Each tablet contains two active medicines: emtricitabine 200mg and tenofovir disoproxil 245mg. This combination interferes with the normal working of an enzyme that is essential for HIV to reproduce.
 - **Raltegravir (Isentress®)**
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 that 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 that they are **not** chewed or crushed. Emtricitabine / tenofovir disoproxil tablet 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 the same time every day, preferably with food.
- Take TWO tablets of raltegravir (Isentress®) 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 to be as effective as possible.
- You should not miss any dose. If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue the regular schedule. Do not take a double dose to make up for the forgotten dose. If over 48 hours have elapsed since the last dose, contact the Sexual Health Service.
- If you have difficulty remembering to take them, use an alarm (eg on your mobile phone). The Sexual Health Service 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), lack of energy or weakness, dizziness, diarrhoea, loss of appetite, headache, tiredness, and muscle aches. These effects are mild and can be managed at home. 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, kidney, liver and/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.

Do not stop treatment without seeking medical advice.

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 (eg 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. The Sexual Health Service 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; hence 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 (a 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 sight and reach of children.
- While you are being treated and until you have received the results of an HIV test and follow up 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.
- If you are at ongoing risk of potential HIV exposure, please discuss future options with the Sexual Health Service for HIV prevention (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, PrEP).

Contact details

Sexual Health Service Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Telephone: 0300 131 7010 to book an appointment

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.

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