



Myths and Realities of PrEP



Sex is a normal part of life, and for most of us, it's something we'll experience at some point. *Whatever your situation*, whether it happens frequently or occasionally, it's important to be prepared and informed when the time comes.

When you decide to have sex, it's essential to understand the potential risks involved, whether they affect your heart, mind, or body. One of the risks to be aware of is HIV, but the good news is that there are ways to reduce the risks!

One such way is PrEP, short for pre-exposure prophylaxis. PrEP is a medication that can help prevent HIV infection. It works by stopping the virus from establishing itself in your body, offering an extra layer of protection when used as prescribed.

Your healthcare team cares! Talk to your healthcare team about whether PrEP is right for you. They want you to have a healthy sex life! Taking steps to protect yourself shows strength and responsibility.

Remember, your health matters—get tested, live fully, and enjoy your experiences and your pleasure.



Also, you can make a difference in your community! Communities with higher levels of PrEP usage have seen significant declines in HIV diagnoses. **So, remember, having sex isn't just about you — it's also about protecting those around you!**
Staying negative is a positive when it comes to HIV!

Understanding PrEP: Myths vs. Realities

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a highly effective strategy for preventing HIV infection among individuals at substantial risk. Despite its proven efficacy, several myths persist. Let's address these misconceptions and provide accurate, up-to-date information.

What is PrEP?

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is medication that significantly reduces the risk of HIV infection when taken as prescribed. It's available as daily pills or periodic injections.

Key Facts About PrEP

- PrEP is highly effective, reducing the risk of getting HIV from sex by up to 99% when taken consistently.
- It's for adults and adolescents who are HIV-negative but at risk of exposure through sex or injection drug use.
- PrEP may also be an option for pregnant individuals to protect themselves and their babies.
- Regular HIV testing is required while using PrEP.

Myths vs. Realities

MYTH

PrEP is only for high-risk individuals.

REALITY

PrEP is recommended for anyone at risk of HIV infection, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

MYTH

PrEP has severe side effects.

REALITY

Most people tolerate PrEP well. Side effects, if any, are usually mild and temporary.

MYTH

PrEP protects against all sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

REALITY

PrEP only prevents HIV. Condoms are still recommended to protect against other STIs (e.g., syphilis).

| Important Considerations

- Consult with a healthcare provider to determine if PrEP is right for you.
- PrEP is safe to use alongside hormone-based birth control methods.
- Regular HIV testing (typically every 3 months) is crucial while on PrEP



Remember, taking steps to protect your sexual health is a sign of strength and responsibility. Your healthcare team is there to support you in making informed decisions about PrEP and other HIV prevention methods. **Help combat the myths, and help your friends get real.**

| References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. Preventing HIV with PrEP. CDC Website. 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/prevention/prep.html>. Published January 18, 2024. Accessed March 14, 2025.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS]. What is PrEP? HIV.gov Website. <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/hiv-prevention/using-hiv-medication-to-reduce-risk/pre-exposure-prophylaxis>. Published February 7, 2025. Accessed March 14, 2025.