

Pharmatipp

Nr. 16

Standard regimen for all	Alternative regimen
Start at least 7 days before the first day of the event, 1 tablet daily at the same time	2-24 hours before sex, take 2 tablets
Continue taking the daily dose at the same time of day for as long as you like	
If you want to stop the prophylaxis, take the tablets for at least 7 additional risk-free days	If you want to stop the prophylaxis, take the tablets for at least 2 additional risk-free days

Table 1: PrEP intake schedule. As a rule, 1 tablet is taken daily, always at the same time and preferably with a meal. Alternative schedule: The time window for taking the first 2 tablets is 2-24 hours before sex, 2 hours is considered short, 24 hours is ideal. **The alternative scheme can be used by anyone who does not practise receptive vaginal sex.**

If you forget a dose, you can take it later in the day. If it is almost time for the next dose, the missed dose should be skipped and the next dose taken according to the usual schedule.

Pharmaceutically relevant additional information

PrEP tablets should be stored and kept at room temperature (25 °C). High (> 30 °C) and low (< 15 °C) temperatures must be avoided. After opening the can, the tablets should be stored in the original packaging, including desiccant, tightly closed. The tablets should be used within 30 days of first opening the bottle. If the pills are required irregularly („on-demand PrEP“), the blister pack is recommended. If the tablets are filled in pill boxes or dispensers, the blister pack is also more suitable than the tin: the tablets can be separated individually so that the pills remain in the protective aluminium wrapping.

The manufacturer of Emtricitabine-Tenofovir-Mepha® is Pliva Hrvatska in Zagreb, Croatia.
Sources UK Guide to PrEP 2024: <https://i-base.info/guides/prep/pdf>, <https://www.aidshilfe.de/hiv-prep/einnahmeschema>, www.compendium.ch, Mepha Pharma AG personal communication.

Translated from german with deepL.com

www.apothekeschaffhauserplatz.ch

Seminarstrasse 1
8057 Zürich
Thomas Kappeler
info@apothekeschaffhauserplatz.ch

www.swissprep.ch

Telefon 044 361 61 61
Telefax 044 361 39 13



HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)

This Pharmatipp deals with the most important questions about the PrEP drug Emtricitabine-Tenofovir-Mepha® (original: Truvada®). Its two ingredients (200 mg emtricitabine / 245 mg tenofovir disoproxil) provide reliable protection against infection with HI viruses (human immunodeficiency virus, HIV).



HIV-PrEP means HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP for short. Used correctly, PrEP protects people from HIV at least as well as condoms, or better. PrEP can only prevent infection with HIV; condoms also protect against other sexually transmitted diseases.

In the USA, Descovy® tablets (200 mg emtricitabine / 25 mg tenofovir alafenamide) and the 2-month depot injection Apretude® (cabotegravir) are also approved as PrEP. Monthly pills and annual implants (active ingredient: islatravir) are currently undergoing clinical trials.

In Switzerland PrEP will be covered by health insurance companies with basic insurance starting 1 July 2024. PrEP costs CHF 50 per 30 tablets in our pharmacy and our webshop, which has been established throughout Switzerland since 2018. This low price applies equally to self-payers and health insurance companies.

PrEP is generally well tolerated. Abdominal pain, flatulence, diarrhea, nausea, and headaches occur mainly at the beginning of the treatment and usually subside. Among other things, skin rashes, pain, dizziness, insomnia and abnormal dreams have also been reported with this medication. Kidneys and bones can be affected and should be checked regularly. HIV and hepatitis B tests are essential before starting PrEP.

As PrEP can affect the kidneys, long-term use with other potentially kidney-damaging drugs should be avoided. The best known of these are painkillers such as diclofenac (Voltaren®), ibuprofen (Brufen®) or naproxen (Proxen®). Every pharmacy will be able to do free drug interaction checks for you.

How does PrEP work?

If someone is HIV-positive and is not being treated with HIV medication, HIV can be transmitted to their sexual partner through their blood, semen, rectal mucosa and vaginal mucosa and cause an infection.

A HIV infection can be prevented with condoms and/or PrEP. After taking PrEP, the active ingredients are distributed throughout the body via the blood. A high concentration of PrEP in the mucous membranes is particularly important, as these can be an entry point for HIV during sexual intercourse.

In the penile and rectal mucosa, the protective active ingredient concentrations are built up more quickly and broken down more slowly than in the vaginal mucosa. This is why the modalities for taking PrEP differ fundamentally for men and women.

Of course, PrEP also protects people during oral sex, but it is not specifically indicated for this sexual practice. HIV infections via the oral mucosa are unlikely and have only been described in isolated cases.

Modalities of administration

Long-term use of PrEP guarantees the best protection from HIV and is suitable for all people who often have high-risk sex. The penile, rectal and vaginal mucosa are reliably protected. Regular and daily use is a prerequisite. To ensure this, it is best to take the tablet at home (e.g. in the morning with breakfast), or you can use alarm apps or medication boxes. Taking it with a meal leads to more active ingredient in the blood.

As a rule, prophylaxis is started at least 7 days before the first event and continued for at least 7 days after the last event. This standard regimen is the safest and best-studied pre-exposure prophylaxis.

Women (and anyone who has receptive vaginal intercourse) must follow the standard regimen. Men (and anyone who does not practice receptive vaginal sex) can also use the alternative regimen. If there is only one sexual encounter, the alternative regimen is known as on-demand PrEP (2-1-1). Taking PrEP then only takes 3 days.

Standard- und alternative regimen follow as table 1 on page 4.

