

Forensic Nursing Service

## Taking HIV PEP

### Human Immunodeficiency Virus Post-Exposure Prophylaxis

#### Risk of getting HIV

If you have been or think you might have been sexually assaulted, you might be concerned about getting HIV. The risk of HIV infection after a sexual assault is not known.

You have a very low chance of getting HIV from a sexual assault. If the HIV status of the person who assaulted you is not known, your chance is even lower.

Research tells us that when someone has sex without a condom just one time with someone who is known to have HIV, there is a very low risk of getting HIV, depending on the type of sexual contact.

#### Preventing HIV with medicines

HIV Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) is three different anti-HIV medicines that are usually used to treat people who already have HIV. In some situations, they can help to prevent HIV infection.

Medical experts do not recommend HIV PEP if the risk of exposure to HIV is low.

Medical experts do not recommend HIV PEP if it has been more than 72 hours since exposure.

#### When HIV PEP is recommended

The forensic nurse examiner talks with you about your situation and your risk.

Medical experts recommend HIV PEP when it has been less than 72 hour since exposure **and** one or more of these situations applies:

- The person is known to have HIV or is a high risk of having HIV (person uses I.V. drugs or a man who has sex with men).
- More than one person assaulted you.
- You were assaulted in a high-risk location.

#### If HIV PEP is recommended for you

You have blood samples taken today. We do this to check how your kidneys are working and make sure you don't already have HIV. We might ask you to go for blood samples again in a few weeks.

You need to take a total of 28 days of medicines, **but** we only give you 5 days of medicines to get you started.

Our Embrace Clinic team arranges for the remaining 23 days of medicine and any further tests. They also oversee your treatment.

#### Important:

It can take up to 3 days to get these medicines. Regular drugstores do not have them.

We contact you the next business day to talk about the medicines and arrange for you to get the remaining supply.

### For people taking HIV PEP

Read the **blue paper** that came with the HIV PEP medicine pack. It tells you about each medicine, and how often to take each one.

Take the pills with food. This lowers the chances of an upset stomach (nausea).

**Except:** Do not eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice with the HIV PEP.

**HIV PEP can react with other medicines and substances.** This includes prescription medicines, over-the-counter drugs, inhalers, vitamins, natural supplements, and street drugs. Unexpected problems can happen if you mix HIV PEP with other medicines or substances.

Before you take **any** medicines or substances, check first with St. Paul's Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy. **1-888-511-6222**

#### HIV PEP side effects

Some people feel fine taking HIV PEP and other people feel sick. Talk to a healthcare professional about any side effects.

The most common side effects are feeling tired, headache, feeling sick (nausea), throwing up (vomiting), or diarrhea.

#### Get medical help if you have:

- numbness, tingling, burning or pain in your legs, hands or feet
- severe stomach pain
- skin rash
- fever (over 38.5°C or 101.3°F)
- mouth sores
- severe muscle aches and pains

#### For women and people with female parts

Try not to get pregnant while taking HIV PEP. If you do get pregnant, contact a healthcare professional right away.

Do not breastfeed / chestfeed while taking HIV PEP. Contact the Embrace Clinic for options.

#### Get tested for HIV

You should have your blood checked for HIV after you finish taking HIV PEP. We suggest HIV testing be done 3 weeks, 6 weeks, and 3 months after the last day you take HIV PEP. Embrace Clinic staff can help you with this.

#### Protect others

Until you get the results of your HIV test at 3 months, you must do these things:

- Protect your sexual partners by using a condom every time or by not having sex.
- Do not share toothbrushes, razors, needles, or other items that might be exposed to blood or body fluids.
- Do not donate blood, plasma, organs, tissue, or sperm.

#### Contacts

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**Embrace Clinic – Forensic Nursing Service  
Fraser Health      604-807-5406** (call or text)

- Get HIV PEP medicine refill, arrange for blood tests, and see for follow-up monitoring.
- Talk with nurse practitioner from our team.

**St. Paul's Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy  
1-888-511-6222**

- Ask about HIV PEP medicines or how they can react with other medicines or substances.