

Patient advice sheet

About HIV post exposure prophylaxis

What is PEP?

The doctor/nurse has assessed that you have a risk of catching HIV from your recent exposure. This risk can be greatly reduced by taking a course of "Post Exposure Prophylaxis", or "PEP", for 28 days. Starting PEP as early as possible, taking every dose as prescribed and completing the 28-day course provides the best protection against infection. Therefore:

- Take the first dose of medication immediately.
- Attend the follow up appointment as advised by the person who prescribed your PEP

The pack you have received may be a 'starter' pack meaning you need to attend a follow up appointment to receive the remainder of the 28-day supply. The doctor looking after you will explain when and where you should attend this appointment. A 5 day course alone will not reduce your risk.

What are the medications involved?

The treatment consists of a combination of two tablets, containing three active drugs. All three are antiviral drugs that are effective against the HIV virus. Used together, there is evidence that they can reduce the risk of developing HIV infection following exposure.

The names of your medicines are:

- Tenofovir/Emtricitabine co-formulation: tablet containing 200mg of emtricitabine and 245mg of tenofovir disoproxil
- Raltegravir: pink 400mg tablets

When should I take medications?

You should take the first dose of Tenofovir/Emtricitabine (one tablet) and Raltegravir (one tablet) **as soon as you receive them.**

The tablets should be swallowed whole, as crushing, chewing or splitting them may affect the levels of the medicine in your body. Taking doses with food may help to prevent nausea (feeling sick), which can occur when you first start taking the medicine.

After the first dose continue to take the medications as stated below:

- Tenofovir/Emtricitabine: One tablet to be taken once each day (every 24 hours)
- Raltegravir: One tablet to be taken twice a day (every 12 hours)

What if I miss a dose?

It is very important that you do not miss any doses and that you take the medicines regularly. This will ensure that the level of medicines in your blood is constant.

If you do miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember and then take your next dose at its regular time. If it is almost time for your next dose anyway, do not take a double dose. Wait and take the next dose at the regular time. If you have not taken any of your treatment for 48 hours you need to let your doctor know as soon as possible.

If you have taken your first dose at an unusual time, you can adjust the doses gradually (1-2 hours each time) until they are at a standard time (e.g. 9am).

Are there any side effects?

The PEP medicines can cause side effects such as sickness, headache, and tiredness. If you experience side effects and feel you can no longer take the medicines, please seek medical advice as soon as possible. Like all medicines, not everybody will experience side effects. If you do develop any side effects they are most likely to be mild and short term.

There are more details on the side effects of Tenofovir/Emtricitabine and Raltegravir in the patient information leaflets enclosed.

If you develop a rash or flu-like illness (e.g. sore throat, fever, muscle pains, enlarged glands) whilst taking this medicine, or during the 12

weeks after finishing treatment, it is important you contact your clinic immediately to discuss your symptoms to ensure they are not an allergic reaction or signs of HIV infection

What should I do if I have a side effect?

Some people will have side effects and others will have none at all. Side effects can also improve over time. The treatment may cause nausea (feeling sick) or vomiting (being sick). If this happens then it may affect how well your treatment works, especially if you vomit soon after taking a dose. It is therefore important that you seek medical advice for these side effects as soon as possible.

Please contact your GP, walk-in centre, Occupational Health Service (if occupational exposure) or bSHaW Sexual Health Service (if sexual exposure) for advice. If outside of opening hours, please contact your local 24 hour GP service (details of this should be on the answer phone message of your local GP).

If you have any other side effects that you are concerned about, please contact your follow-up clinic, GP or NHS 111. If you think you may need urgent medical help, go to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E). Please do not stop taking the medicines unless advised to by your doctor

I am taking other medications.....can I still take PEP?

Calcium, iron, magnesium and aluminium, which can be found in indigestion remedies, some medicines, vitamins and mineral tablets, can stop you from absorbing raltegravir properly. We do not recommend you take these for the duration you are taking PEP.

The PEP medicines may interact with other medicines, including those you have bought yourself and herbal remedies. If you are on any medications, prescribed or non-prescribed, please let medical staff know. Do not start any new medication without discussing with your doctor first. You may drink alcohol while taking these medicines within recommended limits.

After starting the PEP medicines you should tell anyone recommending a new treatment for you that you are taking these medicines. Always check with a doctor or pharmacist before starting any new medicines during the 28 days of treatment.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

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 follow up appointments during and after the PEP course. If you have been given a 'starter pack', you will need to attend a follow up appointment to receive the remainder of the four week supply.

For PEP following sexual exposure: bSHaW Sexual Health Service 0300 300 2880, walk in service available on most days.

Please visit www.sexualhealthbucks.nhs.uk for clinic opening times at Aylesbury (Brookside Clinic, Station Way East, Aylesbury. HP20 2SR) and Wycombe (SHAW clinic, Wycombe Hospital, Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe. HP11 2TT)

For PEP following occupational exposure:

Staff members of Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT): Occupational Health on 01494 425052 (8am to 4.30pm)

For non BHT staff members: contact own Occupational Health service

Important Advice:

- Do not have unprotected sex or donate blood while you are being treated and until your final HIV test confirms that you are not infected
- Do not use recreational or 'street' drugs whilst taking PEP.
- Do not take more than the recommended dose of your PEP
- Do not give your medicines to others
- Keep your medicines in a cool, dark, dry place, out of the reach of children