



PrEP Prevents HIV

PrEP  
ready



Medicaid  
Health  
Plan

[www.amidacareny.org](http://www.amidacareny.org)



# BE YOURSELF

The health plan **for individuals**

**When you're part of the Amida Care community,** you can be yourself. We see each member as a whole person, with physical, emotional, and social needs. We want to help you improve your health and live your most authentic, best life.

  
**AMIDA CARE**  
ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR YOU  
**Medicaid Health Plan**

1-855 GO-AMIDA (1-855-462-6432) (TTY 711)

[www.AmidaCareNY.org](http://www.AmidaCareNY.org)





# PrEP Helps End the HIV Epidemic!

**Welcome to our latest community publication – all about PrEP.** Taken as directed, this game-changing pill is 99% effective in preventing HIV. We invite everybody in our diverse communities to learn more about PrEP and educate others about its benefits.

Increasing the number of New Yorkers taking PrEP is one of our greatest weapons in winning the war against HIV/AIDS. Amida Care strongly advocates for **greater access to PrEP**, particularly among people in our Black and Latinx communities, who accounted for 78% of new HIV diagnoses in our state in 2017. There is less access to and uptake of PrEP in these communities, despite the fact that PrEP usage is on the rise overall. This gap in access must be addressed for New York to reach its goal of ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

We applaud Gov. Andrew Cuomo's mandate for statewide expansion of PrEP insurance coverage. Starting in 2020, New York State insurers must cover all PrEP treatment costs, including screenings and co-pays. This will help more people take control of their sexual health and could avert as much as \$1 billion in future state Medicaid costs spent treating HIV.

As we continue Amida Care's mission to provide comprehensive care for those living with HIV, let's get PrEP-ready and continue to partner with other community organizations and the New York State Department of Health to reach our goal of ending the epidemic.

– **Doug Wirth**, President and CEO, Amida Care





# What Is **PrEP**?

*PrEP is a once-a-day pill that can lower the risk of getting HIV. Currently, two antiretroviral treatments are approved for PrEP: Truvada and Descovy.*

## **Truvada for PrEP**

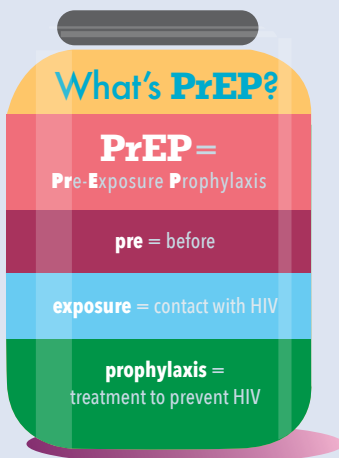
Truvada for PrEP has been available since 2012. When taken daily, Truvada has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV infection during sex by up to 99%. Truvada should be taken daily for at least one week to block transmission through anal sex, and for at least three weeks to block transmission through vaginal sex for women. ★

Among people who inject drugs, Truvada taken daily reduces the risk of getting HIV by up to 74%.

## **Descovy for PrEP**

Descovy for PrEP was approved in October 2019. Descovy works similarly and is as effective as Truvada, but has only been approved for people at risk for HIV from having receptive anal sex (being penetrated anally.) Descovy has NOT been approved for people at risk from vaginal sex. More research is needed to fully determine how effective Descovy is in preventing HIV infection during vaginal sex or from sharing needles.

★ Truvada has not been studied in trans women with neovaginas who are at risk for HIV from vaginal sex. A neovagina is a vagina constructed surgically.



## Where to Get **PrEP**

*You can consult your doctor, primary care provider, or a sexual health clinic to get a prescription for PrEP, if it's appropriate for you.*

*To learn more about PrEP, to find out if it's right for you, or to find a doctor or provider that prescribes PrEP, visit [www.prepforsex.org](http://www.prepforsex.org) or text **GETPREP** to 69866 for personalized advice on PrEP.*

*For more information, go to our website at [www.AmidaCareNY.org/our-plans/prep-pep/](http://www.AmidaCareNY.org/our-plans/prep-pep/)*

# Is **PrEP** Right for **YOU**?

*Talk to your doctor or health care provider about PrEP if you answer YES to ANY of these questions:*

- Are you HIV-negative?
- Do you sometimes forget or choose not to use condoms for anal or vaginal sex?
- Are your sexual partners HIV-positive or of unknown status?
- Have you been diagnosed with sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the past six months?
- Do you and/or your partner(s) exchange sex for money, housing, drugs, or other needs?
- Do you use intravenous drugs, even occasionally?
- Have you been on post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) in the past year?
- Are you trying to get pregnant with an HIV-positive partner?
- Has your partner threatened or forced you to have sex against your will?



## What **PrEP** Is Not:

**PrEP** does NOT protect you from other STIs;

**PrEP** is NOT a cure for HIV;

**PrEP** does NOT prevent pregnancy.



Stock photo with models

# PrEP: What to Expect

*Getting on PrEP means visiting a doctor or health care provider, taking some lab tests, filling the prescription, and going to follow-up visits with your doctor every three months.*

*Remember, PrEP is MORE than just a prescription. PrEP is a program – and a key piece in the HIV prevention toolbox.*



## At Your First PrEP Consultation

To assess your risk, your doctor will ask about your sex life and drug use. Talking about this could feel a bit uncomfortable, but it's necessary to determine your sexual health needs.

### Your doctor will test you for:

- HIV (to ensure that you're HIV-negative)
- Other sexually transmitted infections (STIs): gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia
- Hepatitis B
- Kidney function

## At Your Quarterly PrEP Check-Ups (Every Three Months)

### Your primary doctor will test you for:

- HIV (to check that you're still HIV-negative)
- Other STIs: gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia
- Kidney function





## The Importance of Adherence

- Truvada for PrEP is 99% effective when taken daily for anal or vaginal sex. For maximum protection, make sure not to skip a dose.
- Your body needs to build up a high enough concentration of HIV-fighting medication to keep you protected. These levels differ for anal and vaginal sex. For the greatest protection during anal sex, you need to have taken the pill every day for at least a week. For vaginal sex, you won't start being protected against HIV until you've taken Truvada daily for at least three weeks.



## Peace of Mind

*Taking PrEP is a way to empower yourself. It provides more control over your sexual health and helps reduce stress and anxiety.*



**"I feel much more relaxed about sex now. Before PrEP, I would get so stressed out and panicky..."**

– a young gay man from Callen-Lorde Community Health Center

# PrEP: Costs and Insurance Coverage

## Medication, Doctor Visits, and Lab Tests

**Amida Care PrEP Coverage:** Amida Care members receive 100% coverage for PrEP. We offer counseling, education, and HIV risk assessment. If you are a member and have questions about taking PrEP, contact your doctor or Amida Care Member Services at **1-800-556-0689, TTY 711**.

### Medicaid/ Private Insurance

Medicaid covers PrEP in New York State, and most private insurance plans cover part or all of the costs of taking PrEP.



### No Health Insurance?

Through PrEP-AP, our state's PrEP Assistance Program, all uninsured or underinsured NY residents can apply for coverage of PrEP medication and other costs by calling **1-800-542-2437** or online at **on.ny.gov/34yxKtR**.

### Gilead's Advancing Access

If you need PrEP but lack insurance coverage, Gilead, the maker of Truvada and Descovy, offers a patient assistance program called Advancing Access. Go to **www.gileadadvancingaccess.com** or call **1-800-226-2056** Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. EST.

**"At first, we practiced safe sex using condoms while Sabastian spoke to his medical provider and got on PrEP. Since then, we've been trying to have children together, so we are both great examples of Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U) and PrEP care."**

—**Lailani**, transgender woman, in mixed-status relationship with Sabastian, transgender man, both members of Amida Care





## PREP “ON-DEMAND” DOSING

Taking PrEP **daily** to prevent HIV is the only dosing schedule currently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The NYC Department of Health and other experts have also endorsed an alternative “on-demand” or intermittent approach to taking PrEP – but **only** for people who have receptive anal sex.

This on-demand dosing schedule calls for four pills a week, so it’s sometimes called **2-1-1**. **Here’s how it works:**

- Take two PrEP tablets 24 hours before sex. You can take the first dosage up to 2 hours before sex, but taking them closer to 24 hours is better.
- After sex and 24 hours after your first dose, take another tablet.
- Finally, 24 hours later, take one more PrEP tablet.

Follow this schedule every time you have sex.

**If you have sex again before you finish this 2-1-1 PrEP-taking schedule**, then you should take one PrEP tablet every 24 hours for 48 hours after your final sexual contact.

**If you already took PrEP at some point during the previous week**, then you should take just one tablet (instead of two) as your pre-exposure dose. Next, follow the rest of the on-demand dosing by taking one more PrEP tablet 24 hours later, then your final PrEP tablet after another 24 hours.

On-demand PrEP is endorsed only for people who have receptive anal sex and don’t have sex that often – or those who would rather not or can’t afford to take daily PrEP. This **2-1-1** dosing schedule should be followed carefully, **with guidance from your medical provider**.

On-demand PrEP has **not** been studied in people who inject drugs. Current research suggests that taking PrEP on this **2-1-1** schedule to prevent HIV from vaginal sex is **not** likely to be effective.



# What Is PEP?

*PEP is a medication that can protect you if you take it after a known or suspected exposure to HIV. Like PrEP, PEP is an important tool in your sexual health toolbox. Made from a combination of anti-HIV medications, PEP can prevent you from getting HIV. You need a prescription from a doctor or health care provider to obtain PEP.*

## Is PEP Right for YOU?

If you answer YES to any of these three questions, PEP may be right for you:

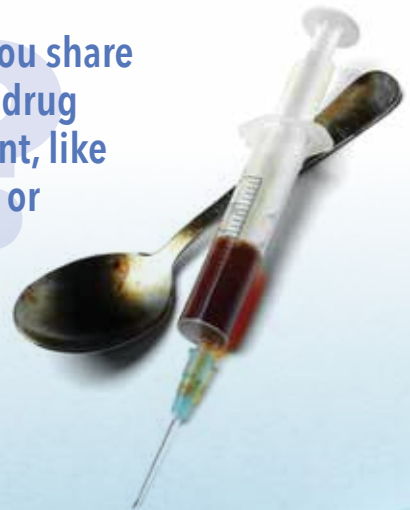


① Did you have sex without a condom or did a condom break during sex with someone who is HIV-positive or whose HIV status you don't know?



③ Were you forced into sex against your will?

② Did you share injection drug equipment, like a syringe or needle?



## How to Take **PEP**

If you know or suspect that you've just been exposed to HIV from sex or sharing needles, start taking PEP **as soon as possible – and no later than 72 hours after possible exposure!** PEP then must be taken every day for four weeks (28 days).



## Where to Get **PEP**

If you think you've just been exposed to HIV, call the **NYC PEP Hotline** at **(844) 3-PEPNYC (844-373-7692)** or go immediately to an emergency room or clinic and ask for PEP.

### What's **PEP**?

**PEP** =

**P**ost-**E**xposure **P**rophylaxis

**post** = after

**exposure** = contact with HIV

**prophylaxis** =  
treatment to prevent HIV

**"As soon as I realized I could've been exposed to HIV, my friend told me about getting PEP, and that's why I'm here."**

– a young gay man from Callen-Lorde Community Health Center



# WHY DO I HAVE TO TEST FOR HEPATITIS B?

Before starting PrEP, it's important to get tested for Hepatitis B (Hep B) virus. That's because Truvada and Descovy work against Hep B, as well as HIV. For some people, these drugs may **not** be strong enough to control an active Hep B infection, so they could cause drug resistance.

If you test negative for Hep B, ask your doctor whether you should get vaccinated. There's no cure for Hep B, but **the vaccine can prevent it**.

If you test positive for active Hep B disease, ask your doctor to check on the health of your liver and prescribe the right treatment for you. If a person stops taking PrEP without realizing they also have Hep B, the Hep B virus could grow very quickly. Their liver could become dangerously inflamed.

You can still take PrEP if you have Hep B, but you need to work very closely with your doctor or medical providers to work out the best ways for you to start and stop taking PrEP.

**THERE'S NO CURE FOR  
HEP B, BUT THE VACCINE  
CAN PREVENT IT.**



# Gay and Bisexual Men: PrEP Use

Although PrEP use in the United States has increased among gay and bisexual men at risk for HIV, greater PrEP awareness and access is needed. This need is especially true for Black and Latino men. Research shows their communities are hardest hit by new HIV diagnoses, yet PrEP awareness and use is lower than among Whites.

**"My partner has HIV, so taking PrEP helps me manage my anxiety. I'm doing what I can to protect myself from HIV..."**

– Raoul, young, gay Latino, Bronx

## Highest Infection Rates

The most recent U.S. data (2016) shows that the populations most affected by HIV are gay and bisexual men, with Blacks and Latinos in this community accounting for a disproportionately high number of new HIV diagnoses. This population experiences homophobia, stigma, and lack of access to care that can increase risk behaviors and pose barriers to getting HIV prevention services.

## Social Issues

Creating culturally appropriate programs that increase PrEP awareness and use in this population, especially among Latinos and Blacks, will prevent the spread of HIV and foster wellness.

**Gay and bisexual men experience homophobia, stigma, and lack of access to care that can increase risk behaviors and pose barriers to getting HIV prevention services.**





# Trans

**There is currently no known scientific reason why PrEP and hormone therapy cannot be taken at the same time.**

## **Transgender Women**

Transgender women are disproportionately affected by HIV, with an estimated 14% diagnosed HIV-positive. PrEP and PEP are important tools to prevent more cases of HIV in this community.

Many transgender women are at risk for HIV through receptive anal sex (being penetrated anally). PrEP has been proven 99% effective in blocking HIV through anal sex, when taken as directed.





# Community

## PrEP and Hormone Therapy

While more research is needed on PrEP and hormone therapy, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) currently reports no known drug interactions between hormone therapy and the medicines contained in PrEP. Therefore, there is currently no known scientific reason why PrEP and hormone therapy cannot be taken at the same time.

If you are worried that PrEP will affect your hormone therapy, ask your doctor or health care provider to check your hormone levels.

People who use PrEP should see their doctor every three months for a follow-up visit that includes HIV testing and prescription refills. This medical appointment could be combined with check-ups on hormone therapy.

## Neovaginas: More Research Needed

In transgender women, the risk to those having neovaginal sex is unknown. A neovagina is constructed during gender-affirming surgery. More research is needed to determine the efficacy of PrEP for transgender women having sex vaginally.

**“PrEP has helped me feel confident to be sexually active again. Now I feel less stressed about my sexual health”**

— trans woman, Bronx



## Transgender Men

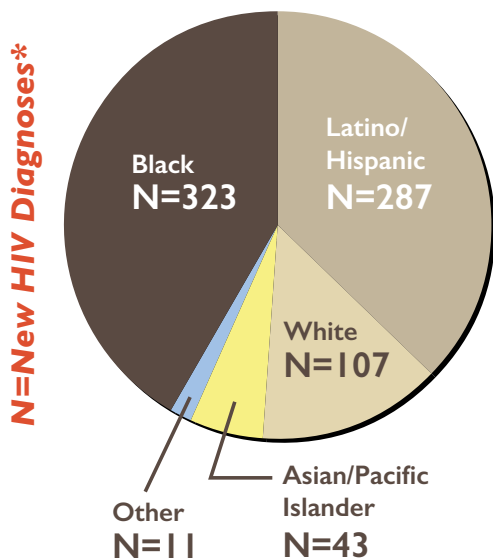
Trans men who have receptive anal or vaginal sex can also benefit from taking PrEP to lower their risks of HIV.



# PrEP for Youth

## More Access Is Needed

The latest available research from the NYC Department of Health shows that in 2017, new HIV diagnoses among Black and Latino males aged 13 to 29 were more than five times that of White males in their age group. Yet statistics show that most New Yorkers who take PrEP are White people. We must close this gap.



\* Number of New HIV Diagnoses among Men 13 to 29 in NYC, 2017

### Meeting Youth Where They Are

Organizations like NYC's **Ali Forney Center** (which annually serves 400+ LGBTQ homeless and runaway youths) provide PrEP and other HIV-risk reduction services at their on-site clinic. In addition to medications and careful monitoring, Ali Forney Center offers their young clients comprehensive support services including warm meals, MetroCards, therapists, job/school opportunities, safe shelter, and housing placement.

Without such services, PrEP adherence – taking the medication as prescribed and going to follow-up medical visits – is difficult, and clients are left vulnerable to HIV infection and drug resistance. To meet the pressing needs of our young Black and Latino gay and bisexual men at high risk, more supportive services are badly needed.

**“My partner is HIV-positive. We talked about it and decided we’d both feel safer if I started PrEP. It works for us.”**

– a young Black gay man



Stock photo with models

# PrEP for Black Women and Latinas

The most common way women get HIV is through sex with a male partner who has HIV. When taken daily for at least three weeks, Truvada for PrEP is 99% effective at preventing HIV from both vaginal and anal sex. That makes PrEP an important prevention strategy for women – one that doesn't depend on your sexual partners. You are in control!

## A Greater Impact

Black and Latina women in the United States get HIV at a lower rate than men, but they are impacted more heavily by HIV than White women. In 2017, 90% of all women who tested positive for HIV in NYC were Black or Latina.



Stock photo with model



LOVE YOUR LIFE



**I'm PrEPed. Are you?**

Learn about PrEP, a once-a-day pill that can help you stay HIV-negative.

[loveyourlife.org](http://loveyourlife.org) | 908.561.5057

funded in part by THE ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE FOUNDATION |  

## "I'm PrEPed. Are you?"

### *New PrEP Campaign at Iris House*

Iris House, the nation's first organization to provide services to Black women and Latinas affected by HIV/AIDS, has long been working to empower and support women with HIV. In August 2019, Iris House launched a new PrEP awareness campaign called "I'm PrEPed. Are you?" This campaign targets women in New Jersey communities, including Elizabeth, Plainfield, and Westfield.

**"Using PrEP has definitely improved my sex life! I still use condoms with my partner, but I feel so much more relaxed and comfortable because I trust that PrEP is giving me an extra layer of protection, in case the condom breaks. Now I'm able to enjoy myself and my partner without worrying about getting HIV!"** – Lucia, a client of Iris House





# PrEP ready

## Amida Care PrEP Program

**Amida Care makes the first move, contacting our members and starting conversations about PrEP and PEP. By taking an active role, we reduce stigma and take the burden off our members.**

Our organization's innovative PrEP Program, a key element in Amida Care's HIV Prevention Services, was launched in January 2018. We are now working to screen all of our HIV-negative members and help them gain access to PrEP or PEP, if appropriate.

### **Making It Easier for Members**

Our program builds awareness of PrEP and PEP among Amida Care's members and staff. We make the first move, contacting our members and starting conversations about PrEP and PEP. By taking an active role, our team reduces stigma and takes

the burden off our members. Someone starting a conversation can really open doors, and help people to talk about their needs and desires.

### **Expert Pharmacy Advice**

Every Amida Care member who starts taking PrEP is contacted by our Pharmacy Department staff and provided with "first-fill" support.

This includes professional advice on proper dosage, adhering to treatment, possible side effects, prescription refills, and necessary follow-up, such as medical visits with lab tests every three months.

If a member needs PEP, our team provides counseling and makes sure they can pick up their medication the same day it's prescribed.

## Advocacy

When it comes to PrEP and PEP research, we advocate for more studies on the effectiveness of PrEP use in the trans community, especially by trans women of color and women with neovaginas (who have undergone gender-affirming surgery). We also note that more testing could be done with cis women and other groups, beyond the studies on cis men who have sex with men.

## The Future

### Educating members, staff, and health care providers

In the next year or so, Amida Care's PrEP Program plans to:

- host a PrEP summit and trainings for our providers, and
- train every Amida Care staff member on the benefits of PrEP and PEP.

### New technologies

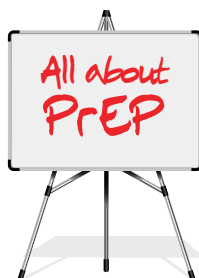
- Talking about sex could be a little embarrassing for some.
- We are looking into new, improved methods and technologies like online self-assessments, so members will have more privacy when discussing sexual health.

For more information about our PrEP Program, call Member Services at **1-800-556-0689 (TTY 711)** and go to our website at **[www.AmidaCareNY.org/our-plans/prep-pep/](http://www.AmidaCareNY.org/our-plans/prep-pep/)**

## We offer



Counseling



Education



HIV risk assessment

## We cover all PrEP-related needs



Medications



Lab test fees



Follow-up medical appointments

# PrEP RESOURCES

## In New York City

**NYC SEXUAL HEALTH CLINICS** – PrEP, PEP, and STI treatment. For locations and hours for all eight of NYC's low-to-no-cost Sexual Health Clinics, call **311** or go to [on.nyc.gov/2PnkZy9](http://on.nyc.gov/2PnkZy9).

**COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE NETWORK NYC** – PrEP/PEP and sexual health programs, via [www.chnnyc.org](http://www.chnnyc.org) or call **1-347-534-8424**. Health centers in Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens, as well as a mobile van.

**CalLEN-LORDE Community Health Centers** – Comprehensive sexual health care via [www.callen-lorde.org](http://www.callen-lorde.org), by calling their PrEP/PEP specialists at **1-212-271-7293**, or visiting their walk-in clinics in Manhattan or the Bronx.

**HARLEM UNITED** – Email [prep@harlemunited.org](mailto:prep@harlemunited.org) to contact PrEP navigators for more information or make an appointment. At [www.harlemunited.org](http://www.harlemunited.org), view the PrEP Conversations video series and PrEP educational campaign called SWALLOW THIS.

**HOUSING WORKS** – Email [BePrEPared@housingworks.org](mailto:BePrEPared@housingworks.org) or call **347-236-7925**. HW's Community Healthcare PrEP Services offer patient education, comprehensive medical visit, help with insurance enrollment, and more.

**MOUNT SINAI** – Call **800-MD-SINAI (637-4624)**, go online at [www.mountsinai.org](http://www.mountsinai.org), or visit locations of Mount Sinai Health System throughout New York City for their HIV/AIDS Services, Men's Sexual Health Project, walk-in HIV testing, and more.

### *For LGBTQ Youth*

**ALI FORNEY CENTER** – PrEP/PEP counseling, housing, and other social services for homeless and runaway LGBTQ youth (ages 13-29). Go to [www.aliforneycenter.org](http://www.aliforneycenter.org) or call **1-212-206-0574**.

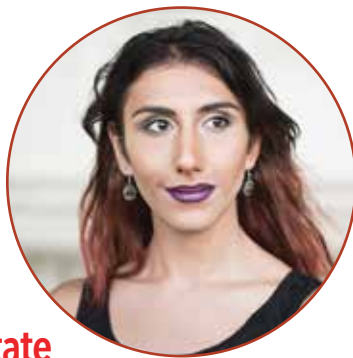
### *For Women and Families*

**IRIS HOUSE** – HIV prevention (including PrEP counseling), support, and other services for women, families, and the underserved affected by HIV/AIDS, visit [www.irishouse.org](http://www.irishouse.org), or call **1-212-423-9049**. Offices in Harlem and Plainfield, NJ.

### *For LGBTQ Elders (Over 50)*

**SAGE** (Services & Advocacy for LGBTQ Elders) – For PrEP seminars and their SAGEpositive Program, go to [www.sageusa.org](http://www.sageusa.org), email [info@sageusa.org](mailto:info@sageusa.org) or call **1-212-741-2247**. Also offered: HIV and STI testing.

**AMIDA CARE** – For more resources and information on PrEP/PEP, if you belong to (or would like to join) Amida Care, call Member Services at **1-800-556-0689 (TTY 711)** and go to our website at [www.AmidaCareNY.org/our-plans/prep-pep/](http://www.AmidaCareNY.org/our-plans/prep-pep/)



## Across New York State

To learn more about PrEP and to find a medical provider to prescribe PrEP near you, go to [www.prepforssex.org](http://www.prepforssex.org).

## Across the United States and U.S. territories

To access the National Prevention Information Network, a detailed online directory of PrEP providers nationwide, go to: [npin.cdc.gov/preplocator](http://npin.cdc.gov/preplocator).

