

PEP - patient information leaflet

What is PEP?

PEP (also called post exposure prophylaxis) will reduce your chances of becoming infected with the virus called HIV. It is made up of three drugs: raltegravir (600mg), emtricitabine (200mg) and tenofovir (245mg). The emtricitabine and tenofovir come as a combination tablet.

Why have I been given PEP?

There are concerns that recently you may have been exposed to the HIV virus.

How do I take PEP?

Once a day you need to take two raltegravir and one combination tablet (emtricitabine and tenofovir). The tablets should be taken preferably with food and it is OK to them at the same time. (If you are pregnant it is likely you will have been advised to take a lower dose raltegravir tablet twice daily.)

How long do I take the medication for?

You need to take PEP for 28 days. During this time you will be followed up by a specialist in Infectious Diseases at Dumfries Royal Infirmary.

You will be given enough medication from the start to allow you to complete the 28 day course. Raltegravir is package in 30 day supplies (60 tablets), the clinician who gives you the medication may remove the four extra tablets or leave you to do that. The instructions on the box will be very clear that you take a 28 day course.

How are my follow up appointments arranged?

Please arrange a follow up with the Infectious Disease Team by phoning 01387 241787 on the next working day after your visit to the Emergency Department.

What are the possible side effects?

Most people cope well with taking the medication. Side effects may include feeling sick (nausea), loss of appetite, stomach discomfort, bloating and flatulence diarrhoea, weakness, feeling dizzy, headaches, change in mood, abnormal dreams and difficulty in sleeping. Sometimes your liver and kidneys are monitored with blood tests to ensure there is no upset. You can speak to an Infectious Disease nurse specialist by phoning 01387 241787 if you wish to discuss any concerns or have any questions about your treatment.

Skin rash: If you notice a rash you must phone 01387 241787 and ask to speak to a member of the Infectious Disease Team. If you cannot contact them then you should contact the Emergency Department. **Do not** take further doses of your PEP until you have been assessed.

You should seek advice about any new illness you develop whilst taking PEP and until you have a test for HIV 45 days after completion of PEP. Important symptoms include fever, rash, sore muscles, tiredness, sores on your lips or in your mouth, feeling generally unwell or swollen glands.

What about other medical conditions I have or medication I use?

It is important that you tell the doctor or nurse who prescribes your PEP about any medical conditions you have. Kidney or liver problems, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, previous pancreatitis, stomach conditions, TB treatment, diabetes and anaemia are very important to know about as these conditions may affect the way PEP is prescribed or monitored. It is **essential** that you tell the person who is giving you PEP about any medicines, recreational drugs, herbal products or supplements you use. Always check with a pharmacist or a doctor before starting any new medicines, herbal products or supplements during the 28 days of treatment. Calcium, iron, zinc, magnesium and aluminium which can be found in indigestion remedies, some medicines, vitamins and mineral tablets can stop you absorbing raltegravir properly. Ideally these should not be taken while you are taking PEP.

What about pregnancy or breastfeeding?

If you know (or think) you might be pregnant, tell us as this may affect the dose of your PEP. Please also tell us if you are breast feeding.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Skipping doses or not taking the pills for the full month makes it likely that PEP will not work. If a dose is missed take as soon as you remember. Skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next scheduled dose. If more than 48hrs since the last dose you should stop PEP and contact Infectious Disease Team by phoning 01387 241787.

What do I do if I vomit?

If you are sick within 2 hours of taking your medication then take the dose again.

What do I do if I want to stop PEP before 28 day course is completed?

You have the right to choose whether to take PEP. Stopping your PEP course early makes it likely it will not work. If you have any problems, questions or concerns about PEP, please talk to the Infectious Disease Team by phoning 01387 241787.

After completing the PEP course will I definitely not have HIV?

PEP does not always prevent HIV infection. It can fail because some anti-HIV drugs don't work against some strains of HIV. It is more likely to fail if it is not taken properly or soon enough.

When will I know that I do not have HIV?

You will be tested at a minimum of 45 days after you complete PEP. This time is called the window period during which it is possible you have HIV but it does not show on a blood test.

What do I do about sex?

Condoms will greatly reduce the chances of passing on HIV through sex including oral sex. You should use condoms for any sex you have in the 'window period' and until you have been tested and the result comes back as negative. You have a legal responsibility to protect others from infection. During this time you must also not be a blood donor.

What about contraception?

Raltegravir, emtricitabine and tenofovir will not affect contraception such as pills, patches, injections, implants or coils (intrauterine methods) but you should also use condoms to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV until you are clear of the 'window period' and have a negative test.

Should I be tested for any other infections?


PEP reduces your chances of getting HIV not any other infection that you can get through sexual intercourse. Many sexually transmitted infections (chlamydia, gonorrhoea, HIV and syphilis) have no symptoms and you should consider having tests beginning two weeks after sex without a condom. You should discuss this with the Infectious Disease in the weeks ahead. You can also contact Sexual Health for testing. Sexual Health clinic times and contact details are as follows:




Appointment line
0345 702 3687
Monday to Friday
08.30am to
4.30pm

Visit us at
www.sexualhealthdg.co.uk


Email
dg.sexual-health@nhs.scot


Helpline 07736
955 219
(Mon to Fri 1-2pm)


Message us at
[Sexual Health](#)

