

A photograph of two men walking a black dog in a grassy field at sunset. The man on the left is wearing a white polo shirt and dark pants, holding a leash. The man on the right is wearing a plaid shirt over a white t-shirt and jeans. The background shows rolling hills and a warm sunset sky.

PrEP TREATMENT

 **Unity Care NW**
Health Care for Everyone

MEDICAL · DENTAL · PHARMACY · BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

CONTACT INFORMATION

UNITY CARE NW

Appointments: (360) 676-6177

To speak with a nurse: (360) 676-6177, 1128, Marsha Tamblyn, RN

Patient Portal: Ask about access to the Unity Care NW portal at the front desk.

Contact your pharmacy for medication refills. Your pharmacy will contact Unity Care NW for prescription authorization.

Concerns We Want to Know About:

- Symptoms of possible HIV infection
- Medication side effects
- Family planning decisions, pregnancy
- Trouble remembering to take PrEP or if you want to stop PrEP
- Questions you may have

LIFELONG

Lifelong provides case management and client advocacy to persons affected by chronic illness.

Lifelong also provides community outreach, education, prevention outreach, counseling and testing, mental health counseling, clinical support groups, emergency financial assistance, food assistance, housing assistance, peer advocacy, volunteer services and psychosocial support for persons with HIV disease or other chronic conditions and their families. Lifelong will guide persons interested in PrEP through the application process for the PrEP Drug Assistance Program (DAP) under the State of WA Early Intervention Program. Contact at:

115 Unity Street, Bellingham, WA 98225-4444

(360) 932-342

connect@lifelong.org

WHAT IS PrEP?

“PrEP” stands for PreExposure Prophylaxis.

The word “prophylaxis” means to prevent or control the spread of an infection or disease. The goal of PrEP is to prevent HIV infection from taking hold if you are exposed to the virus. This is done by taking a pill that contains 2 HIV medications every day. These are the same medicines used to stop the virus from growing in people who are already infected.

PrEP is not a vaccine nor does it work the same way as a vaccine. You will need to take a pill every day by mouth for PrEP medications to protect you from infection. PrEP does not work after you stop taking it. The medication that was shown to be safe and to help block HIV infection is called “Truvada”. Truvada is a combination

of 2 drugs (tenofovir and emtricitabine). These medicines work by blocking important pathways that the HIV virus uses to set up an infection. If you take Truvada as PrEP daily, the presence of the medication in your bloodstream can often stop the HIV virus from establishing itself and spreading in your body. If you do not take the Truvada pills every day, there may not be enough medicine in your bloodstream to block the virus.

It takes 7 days of daily Truvada dosing before there is adequate medication in your bloodstream to be effective in blocking HIV in your rectal area; 20 days of daily Truvada dosing to be effective in the vaginal area.

SHOULD I TAKE PrEP?

PrEP is not for everyone. Doctors prescribe PrEP for some patients who have a very high risk of coming in contact with HIV by not using a condom when they have sex with a person who has HIV infection. You should consider PrEP if you are a man or woman who sometimes has sex without using a condom, especially if you have a sex partner who you know has HIV infection. You should also consider PrEP if you don't know

whether your partner has HIV infection but you know that your partner is at risk (for example, your partner injects drugs or is having sex with other people in addition to you) or if you have recently been told by a health care provider that you had a sexually transmitted infection. If your partner has HIV infection, PrEP may be an option to help protect you from getting HIV infection while you try to get pregnant.

HOW WELL DOES PrEP WORK?

PrEP was tested in several large studies with men who have sex with men, men who have sex with women, and women who have sex with men. Several of these studies showed that PrEP

reduced the risk of getting HIV infection. More information on the details of these studies can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/prep>.

IS PrEP SAFE?

The clinical studies also provided safety information on PrEP. Some people in the studies had early side effects such as an upset stomach or loss of appetite but these were mild and usually went away within the first month. Some

people also had a mild headache. No serious side effects were observed. You should tell your doctor if these or other symptoms become severe or do not go away.

HOW CAN I START PrEP?

If you and your provider agree that PrEP might reduce your risk of getting HIV infection, you will need to come in for a general health physical, blood tests for HIV, and tests for other infections that you can get from sex partners. Your blood will also be tested to see if your kidneys are functioning well. If these tests show that PrEP medications are likely to be safe for you to take and that you might benefit from PrEP, your provider may give you a prescription after discussing it with you.

Taking PrEP medicines will require you to follow up regularly with your provider. You will receive counseling on sexual behaviors and blood tests for HIV infection and to see if your body is reacting well to Truvada. You should take your medicine every day as prescribed so that it stands the best chance to help you avoid HIV infection. Tell your provider or nurse if you are having trouble remembering to take your medicine or if you want to stop PrEP.

IF I TAKE PrEP, CAN I STOP USING CONDOMS WHEN I HAVE SEX?

You should not stop using condoms because you are taking PrEP. If PrEP is taken daily, it offers a lot of protection against HIV infection, but not 100%. Condoms also offer a lot of protection against HIV infection if they are used correctly every time you have sex, but not 100%.

PrEP medications don't give you any protection from other infections you can get during sex, but condoms do. So you will get the most protection from HIV and other sexual infections if you take PrEP medications and consistently use condoms during sex.

HOW LONG DO I NEED TO TAKE PrEP?

You should discuss this with your provider. There are several reasons that people stop taking PrEP. If your risk of getting HIV infections becomes low because of changes that occur in your life, you may want to stop taking PrEP. If you find you don't want to take a pill every day or often forget to take your pills, other ways of

protecting yourself from HIV infection may work better for you. If you have side effects from the medication that are interfering with your life or if blood tests show that your body is reacting to PrEP in unsafe ways, your provider may stop prescribing PrEP for you.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR UCNW CARE TEAM

Initial assessment for:

- Acute HIV infection (prior to starting PrEP and every 3 months on PrEP).
- Laboratory screening to determine potential issues associated with PrEP (complete metabolic panel, renal function, pregnancy testing, Hepatitis screening).
- Advice on methods to help you take medication daily as prescribed.
- HIV risk assessment to determine whether PrEP is indicated for you.
- Potential assistance from Lifelong for insurance questions and case management services.

Information about PrEP use during conception and pregnancy (when indicated).

A prescription for Truvada (300 mg tenofovir disoproxil fumarate, 200 mg emtricitabine).

- Refills are written for a 3 month supply to make sure recommended repeat HIV testing and monitoring is done.

Conduct follow-up visits at least every 3 months that may include the following:

- Assessment of HIV status (including signs or symptoms of acute HIV infection).
- Assessment of side effects and advice on how to manage them.
- Assessment of medication adherence and counseling to support adherence.
- Assessment and/or testing of STI symptoms, multiple sites, depending on sexual practice.
- Assessment of HIV risk behavior and counseling support for risk reduction practices.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU

- **Take a dose of PrEP medication every day.** This may lower your risk of getting HIV infection.
 - **Let us know about any problems** you have in taking the medication every day.
 - **Do not share the medication** with any other person.
 - **Write a list of all of your prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines**, as well as any vitamins, minerals, or other dietary supplements that you take.
 - **Bring your medication list with you** each time you visit a doctor or if you are admitted to a hospital. Keep it with you always in case of emergencies.
 - **Attend all scheduled appointments** – continued refills depend on this.
 - **Complete routine blood tests**, including testing for HIV infection, at least once every 3 months
 - **Call UCNW at (360) 676-6177 to reschedule** any appointments you cannot attend.
- PrEP treatment is costly.** In addition to the expense of medications, you will need to budget for ongoing lab charges as well. Check with your insurer to see what costs may be for high-risk HIV testing, including viral load, a comprehensive metabolic panel and sexually transmitted infection testing.

TRUVADA INFORMATION

Brand name: Truvada (tru va duh)

Generic name: tenofovir disoproxil fumarate and emtricitabine

How should this medicine be used?

- You must take one tablet of Truvada by mouth every day.
- Follow the directions on your prescription label carefully, and ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand.
- Do not stop taking Truvada without talking to your provider. When your supply of Truvada starts to run low, contact your pharmacist to get more.
- You may be at higher risk of becoming infected with HIV if you miss doses or stop taking Truvada than if you take it every day.

What special precautions should I follow?

- Tell your provider and pharmacist if you are allergic to any other medications.
- Tell your provider and pharmacist about all prescription and nonprescription medications (vitamins, nutritional supplements, and herbal products) you are taking. Your provider may need to change the doses of your medications or monitor you carefully for side effects.
- Tell your provider if you have or have ever had kidney or liver disease.
- Tell your provider if you become pregnant or if you are breastfeeding.
- Ask your provider about any special dietary instructions you should follow.
- Continue your normal diet unless your provider tells you otherwise.

WHAT IF I FORGET A DOSE?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue your regular dosing schedule.

Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed one.

WHAT ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS?

You may experience the following side effects while taking Truvada:

- Upset stomach
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Loss of appetite

These side effects usually fade during the first month of taking Truvada for PrEP. Tell your provider if any of these symptoms are severe or do not go away.

Truvada may cause other side effects.

Some side effects can be serious. Call Unity Care NW immediately if you have any unusual problems while taking this medication or if you have any of the following:

- Fever or chills, especially with sore throat, cough, rash or other signs of infection.

HOW SHOULD I STORE TRUVADA?

You should keep Truvada in the container it came in, tightly closed, and out of reach of children. You must store it at room temperature and away from excessive heat and moisture.

Bring any medication that is outdated or no longer needed to the Unity Care NW Pharmacy for proper disposal.

WHAT ABOUT EMERGENCY OR OVERDOSE?

In case of overdose, call your local poison control center at **1-800-222-1222**.

WHAT OTHER INFO SHOULD I KNOW?

Do not let anyone else take your medication.

Write a list of all of your prescription and over-the-counter medicines, as well as any vitamins, minerals, or other dietary supplements that you take.

Ask your pharmacist if you have any questions about refilling your prescription.

Bring your medication list with you each time you visit a doctor or if you are admitted to a hospital. Keep it with you always in case of emergencies.



BELLINGHAM

Medical & Dental Services

220 Unity St.
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 676-6177
Toll Free (877) 235-6850
After Hours: (800) 607-5501

Adult Dental Services, Behavioral Health Services & Administration

1616 Cornwall Ave.
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 676-6177

Pharmacy & Lab Services

218 Unity St.
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 752-7406

FERNDALE

Medical, Dental, Behavioral Health, Pharmacy, and Lab Services

6060 Portal Way
Ferndale, WA 98248
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