

# What you need to know about

Doxycycline  
Post-Exposure  
Prophylaxis

# DOXY-PEP



Department  
of Health



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## What is Doxycycline Post-Exposure Prophylaxis, or Doxy-PEP?

Doxy-PEP is a medicine that can lower your chances of getting chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis, which are sexually transmitted infections (STIs). But, Doxy-PEP can't protect you from getting HIV. Doxy-PEP is an antibiotic called doxycycline, pronounced dock-see-sigh-clin. With Doxy-PEP, 200 mg of doxycycline is taken within 24 to 72 hours after you have condomless sex.

## Who should take Doxy-PEP?

If you had condomless sex, Doxy-PEP may be right for you. *Condomless sex means having oral, anal, and/or vaginal sex when a condom is not used the entire time.*

Talk with a health care provider to find out if Doxy-PEP is for you.

## Who should not take Doxy-PEP?

**If you are pregnant or may be pregnant you should not take Doxy-PEP because it contains doxycycline.** Using this medicine while you are pregnant can harm your unborn baby. Talk with a health care provider about ways to prevent STIs.

## When should I take Doxy-PEP?

**Preferably, Doxy-PEP should be taken within 24 hours, but no later than 72 hours after condomless sex.**



## How should I take Doxy-PEP?

- **Take the full 200 mg dose at one time.**
- **Do not share your Doxy-PEP with others.** If others could benefit from taking Doxy-PEP, they should ask a health care provider.
- Take with plenty of water or another liquid. Doxycycline can be dry when swallowed.
- Stay upright and avoid lying down for at least 30 minutes after taking Doxy-PEP.
- Taking doxycycline with food is recommended because it can cause an upset stomach.
- Two hours before you take doxycycline and for two hours after you take it: do not consume dairy products, calcium, antacids, or multivitamins.
- Some people are more sensitive to the sun when they take doxycycline. Wearing sunscreen is recommended to prevent sunburn.

## What if I have symptoms of an STI after I take Doxy-PEP?

Doxy-PEP is not always 100% effective. If you have any symptoms, like genital itching, burning, rash, fever, sores, unusual discharge or odor, talk with a health care provider right away.

## Will Doxy-PEP help to prevent HIV?

No. Doxy-PEP does not help prevent HIV. There are other medicines available to help prevent HIV. For more information, talk to a health care provider about HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and HIV Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP).

## What if I am taking medicine to prevent HIV? Can I still take Doxy-PEP?

Yes, you can take both medicines at the same time. Taking both could be a sexual health option for you. Doxy-PEP will help prevent chlamydia, gonorrhea, and/or syphilis. HIV-PrEP will help prevent you from getting HIV.

## When can I have sex again after taking Doxy-PEP?

There is no recommended time to wait. But, **if you have condomless sex again within 24 hours of taking Doxy-PEP, take another dose 24 hours after your last dose.** Take Doxy-PEP as often as every day when you are having condomless sex. **But do not take more than 200 mg every 24 hours.**

## **What are possible side effects of Doxy-PEP?**

Most people have no side effects. Some may have mild side effects, such as sunburn, upset stomach, and more rarely, a sore throat. Talk with a health care provider if you have side effects.

## **What about antibiotic resistance?**

Doxycycline has been used for decades. At this time there are no resistance concerns for treating chlamydia or syphilis. But some gonorrhea cases are resistant to doxycycline, so Doxy-PEP may not work for those cases. Talk about antibiotic resistance with a health care provider if you have concerns.

## **What are other ways to prevent STIs and still have sex?**

- Condoms. Use a condom every time you have anal, vaginal, or oral sex.
- Include regular testing and treatment for you and your sex partner(s) as part of your sexual health routine.

## **How can I make Doxy-PEP part of my sexual health routine?**

Doxy-PEP may be an important part of your sexual health routine to prevent STIs. Talk with a health care provider to find out if Doxy-PEP is right for you.

Your sexual health routine may also include:

- Using condoms when you have anal, vaginal, and oral sex with a new partner, or if you or your partner(s) are having sex with other partners.
- Setting a calendar reminder to take Doxy-PEP within 24 to 72 hours after you have condomless sex.
- Encouraging your sex partner(s) to talk with a health care provider about ways to prevent STIs, including HIV. These may include other interventions and sexual health tools, such as Expedited Partner Treatment or EPT, HIV PrEP, HIV PEP, and vaccinations for Hepatitis A and B, mpox, meningitis, and COVID-19.

## More important information about Doxy-PEP:

- **Doxy-PEP protects against only the bacterial STIs, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis. It does not protect against viral infections such as [Mpox](#), [Herpes](#), [HIV](#), and [Human Papilloma Virus \(HPV\)](#).**  
Consistent condom use and regular STI testing remain essential for your sexual health.

## Reminders about sexual health:

- For some STIs, it is common to have no symptoms.
- **Find a health care provider at: [providerdirectory.aidsinstitute.org](https://providerdirectory.aidsinstitute.org)**
- **Find other STI testing options at: [gettested.cdc.gov](https://gettested.cdc.gov)**
- **Find a health center at: [findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov](https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov)**
- **Find a Doxy-PEP provider at: [finddoxypep.cdc.gov](https://finddoxypep.cdc.gov)**
- Continue to get tested for STIs every 3 months. Also get tested whenever you have symptoms, or if you have been exposed to an STI.
- Get tested for HIV and talk to a health care provider about HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (HIV PrEP) and HIV Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (HIV PEP) for HIV prevention.
- Two effective vaccines that are essential to sexual health are:
  - Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine
  - Mpox vaccine
- If you are living with HIV, continue to take your medicines and see a health care provider regularly.



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