

## PrEP

### **What is it?**

PrEP is a drug generally used by those who participate in condomless sexual contact with an HIV-positive partner or those who participate in condomless sexual contact with multiple partners who have an unknown sexual history. Consistent and correct usage of PrEP reduces the users risk of getting HIV from sexual contact by **92-99%**. PrEP is **NOT** an effective prevention strategy for other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) such as:

- Herpes
- Chlamydia
- Syphilis
- Blood-borne infections like Hepatitis C

Contraceptives such as condoms are required to lower the risk of contracting other STIs.

### **Why should I use it?**

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV is a lifelong infection, and while it is manageable with the proper medication, immunodeficiency viruses attack your immune system, which is your body's natural defence system, and with a compromised immune system your body has a harder time fighting against disease.

### **Who is it for?**

PrEP is recommended for men and transgender women who have condomless anal sex with men, those who are HIV-negative with a HIV-positive partner and participate in condomless vaginal or anal sex, and those who participate in and share intravenous drug paraphernalia (needles).

Couples who are in a closed relationship, meaning neither party participates in sexual contact with anyone other than each other, are considered at low risk for becoming HIV positive and do not need to start taking PrEP.

### **Where do I go?**

To get tested for STIs, find out your risk level for HIV, and start the process of accessing PrEP, you can speak to your family doctor. The cost of PrEP is covered by most private insurances but requires a special authorization form that you can obtain from your insurance provider. The cost of PrEP can also be covered by special authorization through the NL prescription drug program (NLPDP) if you do not have private insurance. For authorization for NLPDP coverage, your doctor should fill out the form available on the NLPDP website (<https://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/prescription/>). Please note some doctors will charge a fee to fill out insurance forms.

If you don't have a family doctor, you can see a doctor at Planned Parenthood NL Sexual Health Centre who is able to provide you this service.

### **Then what?**

PrEP is a daily medication. Individuals taking PrEP should have regular visits with a health care provider, once after 30 days on PrEP and then every three months, to test for HIV and STIs and monitor for side effects.