

Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) against HIV infection

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about the post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) pack that you have been given, which you need to use following possible exposure to the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

This pack contains the following medicines:

- Emtricitabine 200mg /tenofovir disoproxil 245mg tablets
- Raltegravir 400mg tablets

What is post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) against HIV infection?

PEP is the name of the treatment given to people who may have been exposed to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The aim is to try to prevent you from getting HIV. A combination of medicines is used.

- Emtricitabine 200mg /tenofovir disoproxil 245mg tablets; and
- Raltegravir 400mg tablets

These medicines act against the HIV virus and help stop it from reproducing. They are licensed for the treatment of HIV but not licensed for the prevention of HIV infection. However, the Department of Health recommends using them when someone may have been exposed to HIV. The leaflet **Unlicensed medicines – a guide for patients** has more information about unlicensed medicines. If you would like a copy, please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Alternatively you can call the Pharmacy Medicines Helpline – contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

To be most effective, **you should start the treatment as soon as possible after your potential exposure to HIV**. It is most effective when started within the first 24 hours of the potential exposure and started **immediately** after receiving the supply of medication. Treatment is much less effective if started 72 hours or more after the potential exposure, therefore starting treatment after this time is not usually recommended.

The medicines should be continued for four weeks (28 days). The pack you have received may be a 'starter pack' meaning you need to attend a follow up appointment to receive the remainder of the four week supply. The doctor looking after you will explain when and where you should attend this appointment.

You may be given different medicines to the ones mentioned above if the person you have had contact with is HIV positive and has a resistant strain of HIV (also called a resistant virus). This is because other medicines may work better in this situation. If this applies to you, you will be given further information about each of the medicines you are prescribed.

Important information to tell the doctor/nurse treating you

Please tell the doctor/nurse if you;

- are taking any other medicines (including any that you buy over the counter in a community pharmacy or health food shop). This is because there are some medicines that interact with PEP medicines, and affect how well they work
- are or may be pregnant, or are breastfeeding
- have any kidney problems
- have any liver problems
- have any other medical conditions.

Information about the medicines and their side effects

Emtricitabine /tenofovir disoproxil tablets

Each tablet contains emtricitabine 200mg + tenofovir disoproxil 245mg.

Take one tablet immediately and then take one tablet once a day (every 24 hours) thereafter. You should take the tablets with food (a snack or a meal), as this helps to prevent nausea (feeling sick) which can occur when you first start taking the medicine.

Emtricitabine /tenofovir disoproxil have been associated with a number of side effects. Examples of those commonly experienced include nausea and vomiting, dizziness, headache, and muscle pain and weakness. It can affect your kidney function but this will be monitored regularly during the course of treatment.

Raltegravir tablets

Each tablet contains raltegravir 400mg.

Take one tablet immediately and then take one tablet twice a day, as close to 12 hours apart as possible. You can take it with or without food. The tablets should be swallowed whole, as crushing, chewing or splitting them may affect the levels of the medicine in your body. Taking doses with food may help to prevent nausea, which can occur when you first start taking the medicine.

Raltegravir has been associated with a number of side effects. Examples of those commonly experienced include nausea, vomiting, indigestion or other stomach problems, decreased appetite, dizziness, feeling of spinning, headache, insomnia, abnormal dreams, a rash, tiredness, and abnormal blood test results.

Further information about the known side effects of these medicines can be found in the patient information leaflets supplied with the medicines.

What should I do if I have a side effect?

Some people will have side effects and others will have none at all. Side effects can also improve over time.

The treatment may cause nausea (feeling sick) or vomiting (being sick). If this happens then it may affect how well your treatment works, especially if you vomit soon after taking a dose. It is therefore important that you seek medical advice for these side effects as soon as possible.

Please contact your GP, walk-in centre, Occupational Health Service (if occupational exposure) or pharmacist for advice. If outside of opening hours, please contact your local 24-hour GP service (details of this should be on the answer phone message of your local GP).

If you have any other side effects that you are concerned about, please contact your follow-up clinic, GP or NHS 111. If you think you may need urgent medical help, go to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E). Please do not stop taking the medicines unless advised to by your doctor.

What if I miss a dose?

It is very important that you do not miss any doses and that you take the medicines regularly. This will ensure that the level of medicines in your blood is constant.

If you do miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember and then take your next dose at its regular time. If it is almost time for your next dose anyway, do not take a double dose. Wait and take the next dose at the regular time. If you have not taken any of your treatment for 48 hours you need to let your doctor know as soon as possible.

Can I take other medicines whilst I am taking PEP?

The medicines contained in this pack may interact with other medicines, including those you have bought yourself and herbal remedies. You should therefore let the doctor caring for you know about any medicines and herbal remedies that you are currently taking.

Calcium, iron, magnesium and aluminium, which can be found in indigestion remedies, some medicines, vitamins and mineral tablets, can stop you from absorbing raltegravir properly. They should therefore not be taken at the same time as raltegravir. If you take any of these medicines, then they should be taken at least four hours before or after raltegravir.

After starting the PEP medicines you should tell anyone recommending a new treatment for you that you are taking these medicines. Always check with a doctor or pharmacist before starting any new medicines during the 28 days of treatment.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

You will need to have blood tests and be seen during the course of your treatment. You will also have follow-up appointments for some months after your treatment is completed. How often you will need to be seen will depend on the treatment you are given.

It is very important that you attend your follow-up appointments at the right clinic.

For PEP following sexual exposure, go to:

Burrell Street Sexual Health Clinic, 4–5 Burrell Street, Borough, London, SE1 0UL
t: 020 7188 6666

For PEP following occupational exposure:

Staff members of Guy's and St Thomas' and the Metropolitan Police Force
Occupational Health Department, 3rd Floor, Education Centre
75-79 York Road, London SE1 7EH t: 020 7188 4152

For non-sexual and non-occupational exposure:

The clinical team in Emergency Department (A&E) will advise you of your follow-up details.

Other departments you may have contact with:

Emergency Department (A&E), Ground Floor, Lambeth Wing, St Thomas' Hospital

Pharmacy, Harrison Wing Department, 2nd Floor, Southwark Wing, Guy's Hospital, Great Maze Pond, London SE1 9RT. **t:** 020 7188 2618. Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, from 9am to 5.30pm and Wednesday, from 1.30pm to 8.00pm.

Further information

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

Was this leaflet useful?

We want to make sure the information you receive is helpful to you. If you have any comments about this leaflet, we would be happy to hear from you, fill in our simple online form, **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets, or **e:** patientinformationteam@gstt.nhs.uk

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