HIVPA
HIV Pharmacy Association

British HIV Association
BHIVA

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**Expert Advisory Group on AIDS**
Providing expert scientific advice on HIV

## Information about the post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) contained in this pack

This pack contains:

Emtricitabine/Tenofovir disoproxil tablets containing 200mg of emtricitabine and 245mg of tenofovir disoproxil.
Raltegravir (Isentress®) pink 400mg tablets
These are both anti-HIV medicines.

Please read this information carefully, if you have any questions or are unsure about anything, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Contact details:

**What is post exposure prophylaxis (PEP)?**
PEP is a 28 day course of medicines taken to reduce the risk of a person becoming infected with HIV after they may have come into contact with the virus. The anti-HIV medicines are known as antiretrovirals.

**What is HIV?**
HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It is a virus, which attacks the body's immune system.

**Is PEP effective?**
It is important to remember that in most circumstances the risk of actually catching HIV from either a single needle stick injury or from a sexual act is small. Taking the 28-day course of anti HIV medicine should make that risk even smaller.
PEP should be started as soon as possible, preferably within an hour, but always within 72 hours of possible contact with the virus.
Starting PEP as early as possible, taking every dose as prescribed and completing the 28-day course provides the best protection against infection. PEP does not reduce the risk of HIV infection to zero, and this is one of the reasons why you will be given appointments for check-ups during and after the PEP course.

**How will I know if PEP has worked?**
You will have follow-up appointments during your treatment and the clinic will arrange HIV tests after treatment. The doctor or nurses will give you information about your appointment. It is really important that you attend all these appointments, please let the clinic know if you need to cancel or change any. Your treatment and follow-up will be confidential.

**How do I take the medicines?**
The first dose of Emtricitabine/Tenofovir disoproxil tablets (one tablet) and raltegravir (one tablet) should be taken immediately. After the first dose continue to take the medications as stated below:

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|---|---|
| Emtricitabine/Tenofovir disoproxil tablets | One tablet to be taken once each day (every 24 hours) |
| Raltegravir | One tablet to be taken twice a day (every 12 hours) |

You should not miss any doses of the tablets. Missing doses may increase the chance that the treatment doesn't work.

This information was prepared by the HIV Pharmacy Association (HIVPA) and should only be distributed to people already taking or who are thinking of taking the listed medicine(s). This leaflet does not constitute any endorsement of the use of the listed medicine(s) by HIVPA, and is intended for information purposes only. Prepared June 2019.

**What are the possible side effects of the medicines?**
Like all medicines, Emtricitabine/Tenofovir disoproxil and raltegravir may cause side effects, although not everybody gets them. If you do develop any side effects they are most likely to be mild and short term. There are more details on the side effects of Emtricitabine/Tenofovir disoproxil and raltegravir in the patient information leaflets enclosed.

Commonly reported side effects of these medicines that may affect up to 10% of people (that is up to 10 in every 100 people) include:

- nausea (feeling sick)
- diarrhoea
- headache
- lack of energy or weakness
- loss of appetite
- stomach ache
- dizziness
- trouble sleeping
- rash

Many of these side effects can be managed at home. An anti-diarrhoeal medicine, loperamide may be helpful if diarrhoea develops. Your doctor or pharmacist will also be able to provide medication to reduce nausea and vomiting; please contact them if you need some.

If you develop a rash or flu-like illness whilst taking this medicine, or during the 12 weeks after finishing treatment, it is important you contact your clinic immediately to discuss your symptoms to ensure they are not an allergic reaction or signs of HIV infection.

If you experience any of these side effects or any other problems which are distressing and cannot be tolerated, or you feel you cannot continue to take your tablets please return to the clinic to seek expert advice or to discuss a suitable alternative. Do not stop treatment without seeking medical advice. Continuation of treatment for the full course will increase the effectiveness of PEP.

**Can I take other medicines?**
The medicines contained in this pack may interact with other medicines, including those you have bought yourself and herbal remedies. You should tell the doctor about all medicines and herbal remedies that you currently take. Common drug interactions include:

- Calcium, iron, zinc, magnesium and aluminium which can be found in indigestion remedies, some medicines, vitamins and mineral tablets can stop you from absorbing raltegravir properly. Supplements, indigestion remedies or multivitamins containing these should ideally not be taken. If these cannot be avoided, multivitamins containing iron, zinc and calcium should be taken at least 6 hours before or after raltegravir.
- Rifampicin

After starting the anti-HIV 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.

**What should I do if I forget to take any tablets?**
Anti-HIV medicines work best if there is a constant amount of the drugs in your body. It is important that you take them regularly and as prescribed.
If you forget to take the Emtricitabine/Tenofovir disoproxil or raltegravir, you should take them as soon as you remember unless it is near the time of your next dose, in which case just wait until the next dose is due. Take the next dose of anti-HIV medicines at your normal time, but don't take a double dose. Remember that missing doses may increase the chance that the treatment doesn't work, so try not to forget to take your medicines.

**Are these medicines safe if I am pregnant?**
If you have had a possible exposure to HIV it is recommended you avoid becoming pregnant until you have completed the PEP course and had an HIV test to confirm you are not infected. You should use a barrier method of contraception (such as a condom) until you have received the result of your final HIV test. Anti-HIV medicines are used frequently in pregnancy but if you think/know you are pregnant or are breastfeeding please tell the doctor who will discuss the safety of PEP in these circumstances.

**Other information**
While you are being treated and until you have received the results of an HIV test, you should use condoms at all times with any sexual partners. You should not donate blood during this time and avoid sharing toothbrushes and razors.

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