

Information about the HIV 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 600mg tablets

These contain three anti-HIV medicines in total, which are needed after a recent risk of catching the virus (two medicines in the first tablet; one in the second).

Please read this information carefully, if you have any questions, 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 becoming infected with HIV after a possible 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?

In most circumstances the risk of HIV being passed on from a single needle stick injury or sexual act is small. Taking the 28-day course of anti-HIV medicine makes that risk even smaller. Start PEP as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours (ideally sooner) but always within 72 hours of possible contact with HIV. Starting PEP as early as possible, taking every dose as prescribed and completing the 28-day course provides the best protection. 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 or 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 PEP. The clinics will give you information about your appointment. It is essential to attend 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 (two tablets) should be taken immediately. After the first dose, continue to take the medications as stated below:

- Emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil tablets One tablet to be taken once each day (every 24 hours)
- Raltegravir tablets Two tablets to be taken together once each day (every 24 hours)

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

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. Any side effects are usually 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 PEP that may affect up to 10% of people (up to 1 in 10 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 on PEP, or during the 12 weeks after finishing PEP, **contact your clinic immediately** to discuss your symptoms to ensure they are not an allergic reaction or signs of HIV.

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?

PEP medicines may interact with other medicines, including those you have bought yourself and herbal remedies. Tell the clinic about all medicines and herbal remedies that you currently take. Common drug interactions include:

- Calcium, iron, magnesium, aluminium and zinc which can be found in indigestion remedies, vitamins and mineral tablets can stop you from absorbing raltegravir properly so should not be taken.
- Rifampicin

After starting PEP, 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, take them as soon as you remember. However, if it is time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular schedule. Take the next dose of anti-HIV medicines at your normal time, but don't take a double dose.

Missing doses may increase the chance that the treatment doesn't work, so try not to forget to take your medicines, you may wish to put an alarm on your phone to help remind you to take your medication.

Are these medicines safe if I am pregnant?

Yes, raltegravir and emtricitabine/tenofovir can be taken in pregnancy. You will be asked to use raltegravir twice daily (one 400mg tablet) instead of once daily. It is important to tell the doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. The doctor will discuss PEP benefits and risks with you.

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.

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. Drug interaction information has been taken from the summary of product characteristics and the Liverpool HIV Interactions – HIV Drug Interactions website. Prepared August 2024