

Medications to Reduce the Risk of HIV Infection

INFORMATION ABOUT EARLY DRUG
TREATMENT AFTER CONTACT WITH
BLOOD OR BODY FLUIDS

Manitoba 

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THERE ARE MEDICATIONS (medicines) that you should take soon after you come into contact with blood or other body fluids of a person who might be infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This early drug treatment is called Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP).

This brochure provides information about PEP medicines for HIV. To learn more about the risks of infection and what to do if an exposure to blood or other body fluids occurs, contact your health care provider.

What are the HIV PEP medicines?

Depending on your age and weight, you may be provided and/or prescribed three of the following medicines:

Name:	Other name/s:
Emtricitabine	→ Combined with tenofovir as Truvada® or generic equivalent
Tenofovir	→ Combined with emtricitabine as Truvada® or generic equivalent
Lamivudine	→ 3TC®, combined with zidovudine as Combivir®
Zidovudine	→ Retrovir®, combined with lamivudine as Combivir®
Raltegravir	→ Isentress®
Lopinavir-ritonavir	→ Kaletra®

Your health care provider may prescribe medicines other than the above.

How do I take these medicines?

- These medicines are taken orally (by mouth).
- Start the medicines immediately (within three days, but best if started within two to four hours after the exposure).
- Finish the medicines unless your health care provider tells you to stop taking them.

Some practical tips on taking the medicines:

Emtricitabine AND Tenofovir

Ideally, swallow the tablet whole.

If you are unable to swallow the tablet whole, you can crush and stir it into a small amount of water, grape juice or orange juice immediately before taking the dose.

May take with or without food.

Lamivudine AND/OR Zidovudine

If you are unable to swallow the tablet or capsule:

- ask your health care provider to prescribe the medicine as liquid
 - empty the contents of the zidovudine capsule (wear gloves) into apple sauce, water or juice
 - crush the lamivudine or Combivir® tablet (avoid inhaling powder) and mix with apple sauce, water or juice
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Raltegravir

Ideally, swallow the tablet whole.

If you are unable to swallow the tablet whole, you can chew it or crush and stir it into water immediately before taking the dose.

May take with or without food.

Lopinavir- ritonavir

Although this may be taken without food, it may be better tolerated when taken with a meal or snack.

Swallow the tablet whole. **Do not** chew or crush the tablet.

If you are unable to swallow the tablet, you can ask your health care provider to prescribe the medicine as liquid. The liquid product has a strong, unpleasant taste, but the taste may be improved if it is mixed in sweet or tangy foods such as chocolate pudding, chocolate syrup or peanut butter.

What are possible side effects?

The following common side effects may occur within the first week of taking the medicine. They may get better over time as our body adjusts to them while continuing to take the medicine. If the side effects continue and are not tolerable, contact your health care provider for advice:

- nausea, vomiting (throwing up)
- fatigue (tiredness)
- headache
- upset stomach
- loose stools or diarrhea (mild to moderate)
- general aches and pains, muscle pain

Do not stop taking the medication unless advised by your health care provider.

What if I miss or vomit (throw up) a dose?

- Taking all the medicine as instructed or prescribed is important to prevent HIV infection.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. **Do not** take two doses within six hours.
- If you do not remember until time for the next dose, just take this dose. Never double the dose.
- If you miss more than three doses in a row or miss doses often, contact your health care provider.
- If you vomit (throw up) a dose of medicine within **60 minutes** of taking it, repeat the dose. If this happens more than twice, contact your health care provider. Medications such as dimenhydrinate (ex: Gravol®) or other prescribed medications to manage nausea may be useful.

What else should I do?

- **Do not** take any other medicine, including herbal products or supplements, without checking with your health care provider or pharmacist.
- Most antibiotics, acetaminophen (ex: Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (ex: Advil®, Motrin®) are safe to take with PEP drugs.
- Tell your health care provider before you start the medicine if you:
 - are pregnant
 - have kidney or liver disease
 - have low blood counts
- Store the medicines in the original bottle with the lid sealed tightly, at room temperature and out of the reach of children

How do I get the medicines?

- You can get a three-day “starter kit” at no charge. This will help you to start the medicines quickly.
- When the test results are ready, your health care provider will tell you to stop or to continue up to 28 days of medicine. **Do not** stop the medicine unless directed by your health care provider.
- Should you require more than the three-day starter kit, your health care provider will give you a prescription to continue up to 28 days of treatment. Take this prescription to your local pharmacy right away.

How do I get rid of unused medicine?

Do not change your treatment or stop treatment without first talking with your health care provider.

If your health care provider tells you to stop taking the medicines, return the unused portion to your local pharmacy. Ask the pharmacist to destroy the medicines. **Do not** keep the medicines for future use or give them to anyone else.

For more information about these medicines, ask your health care provider or pharmacist.