



# Antiretroviral Medications for the Prevention of HIV Infection

## A Clinical Approach to Preexposure Prophylaxis, Postexposure Prophylaxis, and Treatment as Prevention

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### KEYWORDS

- HIV • Prevention • Preexposure prophylaxis • PrEP • Postexposure prophylaxis
- PEP • Treatment as prevention

### KEY POINTS

- Effective human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention strategies include both behavioral and pharmacologic methods.
- Antiretroviral drugs to prevent HIV may be used proactively (preexposure prophylaxis), retroactively (postexposure prophylaxis), and at a population level (treatment as prevention).
- HIV prevention clinic appointments are opportune times to address other common comorbidities that may influence HIV acquisition risk, such as mental health issues and abuse (eg, sexual, drug, or alcohol).

### INTRODUCTION

The past 30 years have seen tremendous progress in both the care of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)-positive individuals and HIV prevention techniques, and currently the pendulum is swinging toward strategies and policies that will enable an HIV-free world. In 2014, The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

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(UNAIDS) unveiled their ambitious “90-90-90” plan, with the goal that 90% of HIV-infected individuals will have a diagnosis (from 79%), treatment rates will increase to 90% (from 59%), and the rates of individuals with a suppressed viral load will increase to 90% (from 47%).<sup>1</sup> These targets were established with the ambition to vastly curb the HIV epidemic by 2020 and eliminate the disease by 2030.<sup>1</sup> Recent global data have demonstrated increasing HIV treatment coverage and decreasing HIV-related deaths, culminating in the highest prevalence of people with HIV, at an estimated 36.9 million people in 2017.<sup>2</sup> Such metrics demonstrate the success of current programs and also highlight the need to continue advocating for policies that ensure people affected with HIV have access to necessary care.

Ending the global HIV epidemic will involve intersectoral cooperation and coordination with several partners, including the public sector, industry, academia, and civic representation.<sup>3</sup> Several active areas of research and quality improvement initiatives are focused on curbing the epidemic and include (1) the implementation of current knowledge to enable better access to HIV and HIV-prevention care, (2) vaccine development, and (3) cure research. Although HIV prevention strategies are one piece of a much larger puzzle pointing toward the global elimination of HIV, such prevention strategies are now viewed as integral aspects in routine clinical and public health care by frontline health care providers and policy makers. Successful HIV prevention care involves the use of both pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic tools (often referred to as “biological” and “nonbiological”), and although the focus here is on pharmacologic mechanisms of HIV prevention, the authors believe nonpharmacologic principles should be seamlessly integrated into routine clinical practice. Such nonpharmacologic principles may include safe sexual counseling, access to harm-reduction strategies (eg, safe injection sites), addressing psychosocial determinants of health, and circumcision, for example.<sup>4-6</sup>

Pharmacologic methods for HIV prevention generally focus on 3 main areas: post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and treatment as prevention (TasP). Here, the authors discuss the evidence driving these HIV prevention modalities and provide practical clinical advice for frontline health care providers seeing patients at risk for HIV infection.

## POSTEXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS

### *Introduction*

Exposures to HIV are generally classified as either occupational (requiring occupational PEP [oPEP]) or nonoccupational (requiring nonoccupational PEP [nPEP]).<sup>7,8</sup> This distinction is important, as there are occasionally unique challenges when managing nonoccupational compared with occupational HIV exposures. Although confirmed or potential HIV exposures may cause emotional distress in both occupational and nonoccupational settings, cases of oPEP are typically easier to manage for several reasons. First, there are usually more opportunities for source-patient HIV testing in occupational settings, whereas this is often very challenging to coordinate in nonoccupational settings. Secondly, antiretroviral therapy (ART) can be initiated rather quickly in most occupational settings and is often started within a few hours of the exposure, whereas there are frequently major delays in accessing PEP care in nonoccupational settings. Finally, occupational exposures typically have less physical or emotional trauma compared with nPEP cases, where, for example, sexual assault, intoxication, or physical violence are common themes and may affect access and adherence to care. Still, with all types of PEP, addressing the patient’s pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic needs is paramount to ensure that patients adhere

to their 28-day ART regimen, return for follow-up testing, and access any additional support services that may be helpful.

PEP was first used following occupational exposures in the late 1980s,<sup>9,10</sup> and the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) first introduced occupational guidelines for ART use in 1990.<sup>11</sup> An evaluation of risk factors for percutaneous HIV transmission and efficacy of PEP was first demonstrated in a large case-control study using zidovudine (AZT) monotherapy in health care workers with percutaneous exposures to HIV-positive patients. AZT monotherapy significantly reduced one's risk of HIV acquisition by about 80% in this landmark study.<sup>12</sup> Large cohort studies have also demonstrated PEP efficacy with 3 ART agents in nonoccupational settings; for example, one large cohort evaluating 702 individuals with nonoccupational HIV exposures demonstrated 7 seroconversions (1%) after PEP initiation and found that of these 7 seroconversions, several individuals may have not been adherent to their medications.<sup>13</sup> Currently 3-drug regimens are the norm for oPEP and nPEP, and most health care settings have protocolized the management of exposures, with evidence-based guidelines now widely available.<sup>7,14-16</sup>

PEP management involves addressing 5 key questions:

1. Did an HIV exposure occur?
2. If a confirmed or potential HIV exposure occurred, what is the risk of HIV transmission?
3. Should this patient initiate PEP and if so, with what drugs?
4. What other infectious and noninfectious disease issues should be addressed?
5. What is an appropriate follow-up strategy?

#### ***Did an exposure occur?***

An exposure to HIV or bloodborne pathogens involves the source patient's blood, mucous membrane, or other potentially infectious bodily fluid coming into contact with a patient's blood or mucous membrane. Although this may seem obvious in the case of percutaneous injury (eg, needlestick injuries) or a history of condomless sexual activity, it is often challenging to confirm if an exposure occurred in nPEP cases involving intoxication or physical and psychological trauma. Many clinicians tend to treat "worst-case" scenarios and prescribe PEP in situations where there is uncertainty determining if an exposure occurred given the time-sensitive nature of initiating PEP (it must be initiated within 72 hours of the exposure), balanced with the relative tolerability of current PEP regimens.

#### ***What is the risk of human immunodeficiency virus transmission?***

HIV exposures may be categorized by the type of exposure and the corresponding risk of HIV acquisition. Several factors should be considered when evaluating the risk of HIV transmission, including the following:

- The source patient:
  - Is the source patient known to be HIV-positive? If so,
    - Is the source patient currently on ART?
    - Does the source patient have a detectable viral load?
  - Does the source patient have an unknown HIV serostatus? If so,
    - Does the source patient belong to a cohort with a greater prevalence of HIV (eg, men who have sex with men [MSM], person who injects drugs [PWID], incarceration history, from a country with greater than 1% HIV seroprevalence, perpetrator of sexual assault or sexual partner of a member with one of the risk factors)<sup>17</sup>

- Is the source patient has very low risk for HIV? For example, does the source patient have a recent negative HIV test with no HIV risk factors? Is the source patient using and adherent to PrEP?
- Was this a mucosal or a percutaneous exposure?
- What was the type and volume of exposed body fluid?

The relative risks for HIV acquisition if exposed to a source patient with nonsuppressed HIV infection are outlined in **Table 1**.<sup>17</sup> Condomless sexual exposures with an HIV-positive individual who has a suppressed viral load (<200 copies/mL) for greater than 6 months have a zero-to-negligible risk for HIV transmission.<sup>18</sup> Although most PEP cases involve percutaneous or sexual exposures, occasionally there are exposures that fall outside of these traditional categories; however, such exposures are mostly very low-risk situations where PEP would have a negligible benefit.<sup>19</sup>

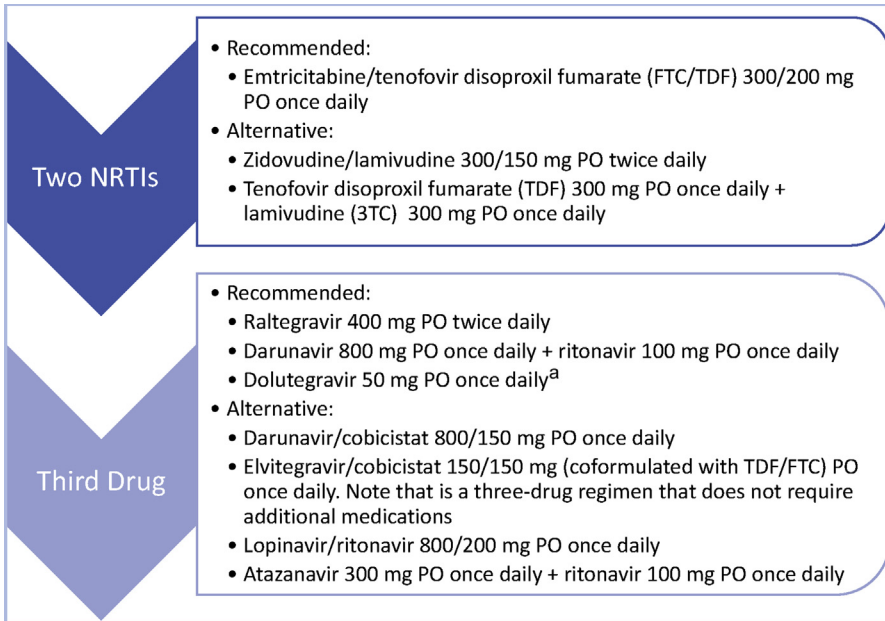
**Should this patient initiate postexposure prophylaxis and if so, with what medications?**

PEP should be initiated in a setting where there is greater than a negligible-to-low risk for HIV acquisition (see **Table 1**). PEP should be initiated as soon as possible and before 72 hours, following a potential or confirmed HIV exposure, and continued for 28 days.<sup>7,14–16</sup> Rarely, PEP can be initiated after the 72 hours window following an exposure; however, this is on a case-by-case basis and typically in cases of very high-risk exposures.

There are several options for PEP regimens, and **Fig. 1** highlights guideline-recommended approaches.<sup>7,14–16</sup> Dolutegravir was previously a common medication used in PEP regimens; however, it should be avoided in pregnant women and women of childbearing age, given the recent findings suggesting an increased risk of neural tube defects if a woman conceives while receiving this drug.<sup>20,21</sup> Although there are several drugs that may be used safely, certain drugs should be avoided, including abacavir, as there is the potential for hypersensitivity reactions and requires human leukocyte antigen testing before use, which may take several days to return.<sup>22</sup> In addition, efavirenz should be avoided due to short-term mental status changes and

Risk Level	Exposure Category	HIV Transmission Risk from a Source with Nonsuppressed HIV Infection
High	Blood transfusion	92.5%
	Mother-to-child (vertical) transmission	22.6%
	Receptive anal intercourse	1.38%
	Needle sharing for injection drug use	0.63%
Moderate	Needlestick injury	0.23%
	Insertive anal intercourse	0.11%
	Vaginal intercourse (receptive)	0.08%
	Vaginal intercourse (insertive)	0.04%
Low	Insertive or receptive oral intercourse	No estimate
	Sharing sex toys	
	Blood on compromised skin	

Data from Tan DHS, Hull MW, Yoong D, et al. Canadian guideline on HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis and nonoccupational postexposure prophylaxis. *Can Med Assoc J.* 2017;189(47):E1448-E1458; and Patel P, Barkowf CB, Brooks JT, Lasry A, Lansky A, Mermin J. Estimating per-act HIV transmission risk: a systematic review. *AIDS.* 2014;28(10):1509-1519.



**Fig. 1.** Antiretroviral therapy options for PEP, favoring a 3-drug approach combining 2 NRTIs and an integrase inhibitor or a protease inhibitor. NRTIs, nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors. <sup>a</sup> Dolutegravir should not be used in pregnant women and women of childbearing age, given the potential risk of neural tube defects.<sup>20,21</sup> (Data from Refs. <sup>7,14,16,24</sup>)

potential teratogenicity.<sup>23,24</sup> Older drugs that are no longer recommended for HIV treatment due to toxicity, such as indinavir, stavudine, and didanosine, should also not be used for PEP.<sup>25,26</sup>

### **What other infectious and noninfectious disease issues should be addressed?**

The first point of health care contact following a potential HIV exposure is usually an emergency department or an outpatient clinical setting. Before initiating PEP, patients should have baseline investigations, including HIV testing (preferably with a fourth-generation assay that detects both HIV antibodies and p24 antigen), hepatitis B and C serology, in addition to a complete blood count, creatinine, electrolytes, liver enzyme testing, and a pregnancy test for female patients. Patients presenting after a sexual exposure should be screened for chlamydia and gonorrhea (with urine, pharyngeal, and rectal screening, using nucleic acid amplification tests, where available) and syphilis serology. Inquiry into concomitant medications (including nonprescribed “over-the-counter” medications) and allergies is important to limit the risk of potential drug interactions and adverse effects. If the patient is nonimmune to hepatitis B, consideration should be given to starting hepatitis B postexposure prophylaxis<sup>27</sup> as well as vaccination for hepatitis B and A where necessary.<sup>28,29</sup>

PEP visits are teachable moments and great opportunities for health promotion. Such clinic visits enable health care providers to explore concomitant syndemic health problems such as drug or alcohol abuse, other mental health issues, and physical and sexual abuse that may increase one’s risk for HIV acquisition.<sup>30–32</sup> PEP visits are also an opportune time to liaise individuals with targeted resources to help mitigate these syndemic health issues.

During the consultation, patients should be counseled on the importance of PEP adherence and what an HIV seroconversion illness is, and that they should seek care should they have such symptoms. They should also be advised on taking necessary steps to prevent transmission to others until their follow-up HIV status is confirmed as negative, such as wearing barrier protection during intercourse and refraining from donating blood, plasma, semen, breast milk, or organs, in addition to refraining from sharing drug injection paraphernalia, razors, and tooth brushes.

### ***What is an appropriate follow-up strategy?***

Poor adherence to 28-day PEP regimens and to clinic appointments is a frequent issue.<sup>33</sup> PEP regimens containing integrase inhibitors are generally well tolerated, and PEP regimens may be changed to these if there are side effects with other ARV classes to help improve adherence.<sup>34–37</sup> Ensuring patients have a close friend, family member, or community support worker to help facilitate improved adherence to medications and clinic appointments is helpful.

A fourth-generation HIV assay and hepatitis C virus serology should be repeated at 3 to 4 months following the initial exposure. If hepatitis C was acquired from the exposure, HIV testing should be repeated at the 6-month mark as there may be delayed seroconversion in these instances.<sup>7,16</sup> Repeat testing for hepatitis B should be considered if the patient is hepatitis B nonimmune and did not receive HBV postexposure prophylaxis. Depending on the exposure, patients should be rescreened for other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as gonorrhea, chlamydia and syphilis. Female patients who require PEP for a sexual exposure should have a pregnancy test repeated at 6 to 12 weeks. Any baseline bloodwork that was noted to be abnormal will need ongoing monitoring while the patient is on PEP, typically at the 2-week mark, and this may include abnormal liver function tests, renal function tests, and glucose.<sup>16</sup> As with the initial PEP clinic appointment, follow-up appointments are also opportune times for health promotion and to screen for drug or alcohol abuse, conduct safe sexual counseling, and to connect patients with helpful resources. Many patients presenting for PEP may be good candidates for other HIV prevention modalities such as PrEP, and the final PEP appointment may be an appropriate time to transition from PEP to PrEP care in those with ongoing HIV risk factors.<sup>38</sup>

## **PREEXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS**

### ***Introduction***

Select populations remain at increased risk for HIV acquisition. For example, the risk of acquiring HIV is 27 times higher among MSM, 23 times higher among PWID, and 13 times higher among female commercial sex workers compared with the general public.<sup>2</sup> In 2016, MSM represented 64% of the population with HIV in the United States, and they accounted for 66% of new infections overall.<sup>39,40</sup> PWID accounted for an estimated 6% to 9% of new HIV diagnoses in the United States between 2010 and 2015.<sup>39,40</sup> Canadian statistics show similar estimates, with MSM and PWID accounting for 52.5% and 14.3% of HIV incidences, respectively.<sup>41</sup> Globally, Southern and Eastern Africa are home to more than half of the total number of people with HIV<sup>42</sup> and there continue to be several logistic, financial, cultural, and legal barriers that stand in the way of implementing widescale HIV prevention strategies in this region.<sup>43,44</sup> Harm-reduction counseling and education alone have not been able to reduce the rates of HIV in at-risk populations, and additional pharmacologic HIV prevention approaches are necessary to curb the epidemic.

PrEP is the proactive use of ART in HIV-negative individuals to mitigate the risk of HIV acquisition in those at greater risk for infection. This approach has gained ground

quickly in the past few years as part of an integrated strategy to reduce the global burden of HIV. PrEP was first introduced into routine clinical practice in 2012, with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approving combined emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (FTC/TDF) for use in HIV-negative individuals<sup>45</sup> and then with the World Health Organization (WHO) releasing PrEP guidelines that same year.<sup>46</sup> To date, multiple public health organizations have released PrEP guidelines.<sup>16,24,47–49</sup> Although PrEP may reduce HIV acquisition at an individual level, it is also demonstrated to significantly reduce HIV transmission at a population level when implemented broadly,<sup>50</sup> and there are currently efforts to scale up PrEP use in both high- and low-resource settings outside of clinical trials and into routine clinical care.

### Early Evidence for Preexposure Prophylaxis

The path toward the FDA and WHO's approval of PrEP involved decades of research beginning with nonhuman studies and culminating in large clinical trials. In 1995, Tsai and colleagues<sup>51</sup> were able to demonstrate reductions in Simian Immunodeficiency Virus transmission in macaques by using TDF before and shortly after inoculation. Multiple nonhuman primate studies followed, with sentinel human studies emerging in 2010 and outlined in [Table 2](#).

The iPrEx study is an early landmark PrEP trial where 2499 HIV-negative MSM or transgender women received either FTC/TDF or placebo and were followed prospectively. This study demonstrated that those receiving FTC/TDF as PrEP had a 44% reduction in HIV incidence.<sup>52</sup> Several subsequent studies then evaluated the role of PrEP in heterosexual populations, notably women. The FEM-PrEP Study Group's trial in Kenya, South Africa, and Tanzania evaluated the effectiveness of PrEP for HIV-negative heterosexual women with HIV-positive partners but failed to show a reduction in HIV acquisition risk.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, the VOICE trial conducted in South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe also failed to show a significant reduction in HIV acquisition with oral or vaginal PrEP in at-risk heterosexual women.<sup>54</sup> The lack of efficacy in these trials is attributed to the very low adherence to PrEP, measured at 12% in FEM-PrEP<sup>53</sup>

Study Name (Year)	Population	PrEP Regimen	Overall HIV Reduction	HIV Reduction in Those Adhering to PrEP
iPrEx (2010)	MSM and transgender women	FTC/TDF daily	44%	92%
TDF2 (2012)	Heterosexual couples	TDF	62%	-
FEM-PrEP (2012)	Heterosexual women	FTC/TDF	0% <sup>a</sup>	-
Partners PrEP (2013)	Heterosexual serodiscordant couples	FTC/TDF	75%	86%
		TDF	67%	90%
Bangkok Tenofovir Study (2013)	People who use injection drugs	TDF	49%	70%
VOICE (2015)	Heterosexual women	FTC/TDF	0% <sup>a</sup>	-
		TDF	0% <sup>a</sup>	-
PROUD (2016)	MSM	FTC/TDF	86%	86%

<sup>a</sup> Low adherence was noted in these studies.

and between 25% and 30% of individuals in VOICE, despite a self-reported adherence rate of 90%.<sup>54</sup>

The Partners PrEP Study randomized serodiscordant heterosexual couples to once-daily TDF, FTC/TDF, or placebo in Kenya and Uganda. All participants were also educated on risk reduction and safe sexual practices. A reduction in HIV transmission was observed with the use of TDF or FTC/TDF, and although nonsignificant, FTC/TDF demonstrated a higher relative reduction in HIV incidence compared with TDF alone.<sup>55</sup> Unlike the FEM-PrEP and VOICE trials, the Partners PrEP Study reported better adherence (up to 92%) to prescribed medications.

The TDF2 trial attempted to demonstrate PrEP efficacy in heterosexual couples in Botswana with FTC/TDF; however, the study was not adequately powered for this purpose.<sup>56</sup> Although the trial was terminated early due to low retention rates, interim efficacy analyses demonstrated a 62.6% reduction in HIV infections, but these data must be interpreted in the appropriate context, given the early termination of the trial.

The PROUD study, published in 2016, was an open-label randomized trial conducted in England that looked to address the efficacy of PrEP in real-world settings.<sup>57</sup> Five hundred forty-four individuals deemed to be at risk for HIV acquisition were randomized to receive FTC/TDF either immediately or a year later. The study reported an 86% relative reduction of HIV incidence in the early PrEP group compared with those in the delayed group.

Lastly, the Bangkok Tenofovir Study (BTS) evaluated PrEP with daily TDF (compared with placebo) in PWID in Bangkok, Thailand.<sup>58</sup> All participants received monthly HIV testing and individualized risk-reduction counseling and were offered condoms and methadone treatment. The study arm demonstrated a 48.9% reduction in HIV incidence without a significant difference in serious adverse outcomes. BTS highlights the efficacy of PrEP in PWID when used in combination with other harm-reduction strategies.

Outside of controlled trials, PrEP had demonstrated incredible efficacy in “real-world” situations with robust data emerging in Canada, United States, and Australia.<sup>50,59–62</sup>

### ***Prescribing Preexposure Prophylaxis***

#### ***The initial preexposure prophylaxis visit***

Pragmatic, user-friendly PrEP Guidelines are now available from many public health bodies and outline routine PrEP care in clinical practice.<sup>16,24,48,49</sup> Patients presenting for PrEP may be referred to specialist clinics or present directly to primary care providers and occasionally nurse-led providers.<sup>63</sup> The initial visit should focus on evaluating a patient’s current and near-future risk for HIV acquisition and other preventable infections, screening for syndemic health issues such as depression or drug and alcohol abuse, and reiterating education related to HIV risk reduction (**Table 3**).<sup>64</sup> The HIV Incidence Risk Index for Men who have Sex with Men is a tool to help identify MSM who may benefit from PrEP<sup>16,65</sup>; however, many clinicians do not use this in routine practice, as it may be time consuming in an otherwise busy clinic. Clinical appointments are an opportune time to link individuals with helpful resources, such as alcohol or drug abuse programs, or psychosocial support where necessary.

Baseline investigations should be obtained before PrEP initiation and include a complete blood count, liver enzyme tests, and creatinine. HIV screening should preferably use a fourth-generation assay. In the context of a potential acute HIV infection, testing for HIV RNA nucleic acid is preferable, and if it is not available, then repeat testing with another fourth-generation HIV screen 2 to 4 weeks later is



<b>Issues on Medical History</b>	<b>Relevance to PrEP</b>
1. Past medical history including a focus on bone and renal health	Currently FTC/TDF is the only recommended PrEP medication, and this may reduce bone density and has the potential for nephrotoxicity <sup>73,75</sup>
2. Current medications	Prescribed and nonprescribed medication may interact with FTC/DTF
3. Allergies	Many STI treatments involve beta-lactam antibiotics (eg, ceftriaxone for gonorrhea treatment). Inquire about drug allergies, as many patients on PrEP are at increased risk for acquiring STIs. <sup>89</sup>
4. Risk of HIV acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Sexual risk factors               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Frequency of sexual encounters</li> <li>b. Number of sexual partners</li> <li>c. Number of known HIV-positive partners</li> <li>d. Number of partners with known STI history</li> <li>e. Patterns of barrier protection usage</li> <li>f. Use of concomitant alcohol or drugs with sex or participation in chemsex<sup>a</sup></li> <li>g. Current or past history of sexual abuse or challenges with condom negotiation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5. Injection drug use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Frequency of injection drug use</li> <li>ii. Sharing of drug paraphernalia</li> <li>iii. Safety of drug use (eg, inject with partner supervision, use of safe injection sites, naloxone kit availability)</li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup> Intercourse under the influence of psychoactive substances to enhance sexual arousal; often associated with geolocating mobile applications.

recommended.<sup>16,49</sup> HIV testing should ideally be negative within a week before starting PrEP. Other blood work should include hepatitis A, B, and C serology and then ensuring individuals are immune to hepatitis A and B.<sup>16,66,67</sup> Patient should be screened for STIs, such as chlamydia, gonorrhea (urine nucleic acid amplification test, rectal and pharyngeal culture, or nucleic acid amplification tests, if indicated by exposure), and syphilis, and treated as per local guidelines.

### **What should you prescribe and how should you follow the patient?**

FTC/TDF is currently the only medication approved for PrEP; however, the DISCOVER trial recently demonstrated the noninferiority of combined emtricitabine/tenofovir alafenamide (FTC/TAF) compared with FTC/TDF in PrEP care and will likely be used more regularly in this setting given the favorable renal and bone toxicity profiles.<sup>68</sup> Although once-daily FTC/TDF is the more widely used PrEP regimen, “on-demand” (also referred to as “event-driven”) PrEP is an alternative method. The ANRS IPERGAY evaluated on-demand PrEP in 414 MSM participants who were randomized to either using FTC/TDF or placebo before and shortly after sex.<sup>69</sup> FTC/TDF was prescribed as a fixed-dose combination (200 mg of FTC and 300 mg of TDF per pill) and participants administered a loading dose of 2 pills 2 to 24 hours before sex, followed by a third pill 24 hours after the first pill, and finally a fourth pill 24 hours later. Although 14 HIV infections were seen in the placebo group, the on-demand PrEP group only saw 2

infections for a relative risk reduction of 86%.<sup>69</sup> We present both daily and on-demand PrEP options to most patients and find that most individuals prefer daily PrEP due to the high frequency of condomless sexual activity and ease of a once-daily medication.

Patients taking PrEP are to follow-up in clinic every 3 months to screen for HIV, STIs, medication toxicity, and medication adherence. These are also opportune times to discuss other health promotion strategies (eg, seasonal influenza vaccination) and continue to screen and offer support for additional issues such as alcohol and drug abuse or mental health issues. The authors prescribe PrEP in 4-month increments and ask patients to follow-up in 3- to 3.5-month increments, as some patients may miss a scheduled appointment and the longer prescription time allows for such scheduling issues while ensuring patients do not go without PrEP.

The authors also screen patients at each follow-up visit to determine if PrEP is still indicated. Many individuals have some fluidity in their sexual risk and may start and stop PrEP based on their most current risk. At follow-up visits, repeat HIV testing and STI screening should be performed as outlined in the initial visit, and safety laboratories include a complete blood count, creatinine, and a urine protein-to-creatinine ratio to screen for possible adverse effects of FTC/TDF.<sup>16,48,49</sup>

### ***Additional Preexposure Prophylaxis Considerations***

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#### ***Other human immunodeficiency virus prevention modalities***

Some patients may request a pharmacologic HIV prevention modality but have very few condomless sexual exposures to warrant daily PrEP. In such cases, it is challenging to balance using daily medications to prevent very rare HIV exposures with the costs of medication and potential side effects such as renal and bone toxicity. In addition, there is some uncertainty in the efficacy of on-demand PrEP in individuals with very infrequent potential HIV exposures. In these circumstances, one may consider “on-demand PEP,” also termed “PEP-in-pocket,” (or “PIP”), where patients who have up to 4 potential HIV exposures per year are given a prescription for a 28-day supply of PEP (see Fig. 1). Patients are counseled to fill the prescription and only take the medications should they have a potential HIV exposure. Patients are counseled to follow-up in clinic within a week of their exposure if they started PEP for baseline investigations. Such an approach may enable timely access to HIV prevention, promote autonomy over one’s care, and avoid emergency department visits.<sup>70</sup>

#### ***Pregnancy and lactation***

The effect of FTC/TDF on fetal and infant growth is not well understood but thought to be relatively safe.<sup>71</sup> FTC/TDF did not demonstrate any significant effect on pregnancy outcomes in the Partners PrEP trial,<sup>55</sup> and data from HIV-positive women exposed to TDF also corroborate the relative safety in pregnancy.<sup>72</sup> Given the limited evidence in peripartum use of PrEP, patients should be counseled on potential benefits versus risks of PrEP during pregnancy and lactation.<sup>48</sup>

#### ***Adverse effects***

Serious adverse effects are very infrequent in those on PrEP. Mild gastrointestinal symptoms are reported to be the most common adverse symptoms and are generally limited to the first month of PrEP use.<sup>52,55</sup> PrEP has also been associated with a decline in renal function. For example, the Partners PrEP Study demonstrated a decrease in estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) starting at 1 month of PrEP use; however, this decline in GFR did not progress and is not thought to be clinically relevant in those with normal baseline eGFRs.<sup>73</sup> Also reassuring is that renal function recovered with discontinuation of PrEP<sup>74</sup>; however, because of the potential for

nephrotoxicity, PrEP should only be used in those with a glomerular filtration rate of greater than or equal to 60 mL/min.<sup>16,24,48,49</sup> Several studies have demonstrated a mild but significant decrease in bone mineral density (BMD) on PrEP, even as early as 24 weeks after initiating FTC/TDF.<sup>75</sup> Although this is thought to be statistically significant, it has not demonstrated clinical significance in those with normal BMDs, and BMD returns to normal with discontinuation of PrEP. FTC/TAF has a favorable renal and bone toxicity profile compared with FTC/TDF.<sup>68</sup> With the recent noninferiority findings of this medication compared with FTC/TDF in PrEP care, we may see a reduced rate of adverse outcomes with scale-up of this drug; however, at the time of writing, this FTC/TAF has not been approved in HIV prevention guidelines.<sup>68</sup>

### ***Change in sexual behavior and sexually transmitted infection risk while on preexposure prophylaxis***

There are concerns for greater rates of condomless sexual activities and increasing rates of bacterial STIs with PrEP scale-up, especially in the context of emerging drug-resistant STIs.<sup>76</sup> Although behavioral data in real world settings are limited, several randomized controlled trials demonstrated decreasing rates of high-risk sexual behavior while on PrEP.<sup>52,53,56,58</sup> In contrast, the ANRS IPERGAY study demonstrated greater rates of condomless sex during the course of that study.<sup>69</sup> A recent systematic review looking at 16 studies demonstrated more condomless sexual acts and a significant increase in rectal chlamydia in those on PrEP,<sup>77</sup> but the utility of this review was limited by the heterogeneity of the included studies. Still this highlights the importance of safe sexual counseling and the need for frequent STI screening (and treatment if necessary) at 3-month intervals in those taking PrEP.

### ***Antiviral resistance and human immunodeficiency virus acquisition***

There is a risk of developing HIV resistant to FTC/TDF if HIV is acquired while on PrEP or if patients initiate PrEP with unrecognized HIV infection. For example, the FEM-PrEP trial reported antiretroviral resistance developing among 4 recently infected patients following PrEP initiation.<sup>53</sup> In addition, a man in Toronto acquired a multidrug-resistant HIV-1 strain despite using PrEP with biochemical data suggesting adequate drug adherence.<sup>78</sup> Hence, it is crucial to ensure patients are HIV-negative before initiating PrEP and to counsel those on PrEP to use barrier protection.

### ***Treatment as Prevention***

Treatment as Prevention (TasP) entails prescribing ART to everyone infected with HIV with the goal of reducing viral loads to non-detectable levels in individuals, and subsequently reducing HIV transmission in communities. Several studies over the past decade demonstrate that an individual's HIV transmission risk can theoretically be eliminated if their viral load is undetectable. Data published in 2011 demonstrated that the early initiation of ART significantly reduced transmission of HIV between serodiscordant couples.<sup>79</sup> In addition, a systematic review of HIV transmission in HIV-discordant heterosexual couples with viral load suppression less than 400 copies/mL showed a transmission rate of 1 per 79 person years.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, a prospective cohort analysis of HIV serodiscordant couples in 7 African nations demonstrated a 92% reduction in transmission in those on ART with suppressed viral loads.<sup>81</sup> A recent retrospective analysis of Taiwan's HIV surveillance data showed a 53% reduction in HIV transmission rates after providing free ART to all HIV-infected citizens,<sup>82</sup> and a similar population-based study in British Columbia demonstrated a 52% reduction in new HIV diagnoses with increasing financial coverage for ART.<sup>83</sup> Initiation of ART showed not only a significant impact on reduction of HIV

transmission but also a reduction in tuberculosis transmission in highly endemic regions.<sup>84</sup>

The PARTNER study from 2016 and the PARTNER 2 study from 2019 provided recent and robust data supporting TasP.<sup>18,85</sup> These studies evaluated condomless sexual activity among serodiscordant couples when the HIV-positive partner had an undetectable viral load (<200 copies/mL) that did not result in HIV transmission to the HIV-negative partner.<sup>18</sup> This prospective, observational, multicenter study included serodiscordant heterosexual couples and MSM and prompted the Undetectable = Untransmittable (U = U) movement.<sup>86</sup> U = U promotes the notion that those HIV-positive individuals on suppressive ART with undetectable viral loads (<200 copies/mL for >6 months) cannot sexually transmit the virus to their partners, and this is now being accepted by major public health bodies and integrated into guidelines.<sup>8,49,87</sup> Other recent studies that support U = U include the “Opposites Attract” study, where there were no phylogenetically linked cases of HIV transmission between 343 serodiscordant male couples (where one was virologically suppressed) and 232.2 couple years of follow-up in a prospective international study.<sup>88</sup>

Although TasP and U = U have widescale public health implications, these concepts are also applicable at the clinical level. These concepts (and the primary data that drives them) are frequently discussed in routine clinical settings while counseling patients at risk for HIV acquisition. TasP and U = U can help frame the discussion related to whether a patient is a candidate for PEP, PrEP, or other HIV prevention modalities and is helpful for patient-level education of HIV transmission risk, especially for serodiscordant couples.

## SUMMARY

PEP, PrEP, and TasP are very effective HIV prevention modalities that have the potential to benefit individuals at risk for HIV acquisition and decrease HIV transmission in populations. Although these tools are now becoming more firmly entrenched into routine clinical practice, there is room for scale in many low-resource settings, especially those that are most affected by the HIV pandemic. Increasing global implementation of these HIV prevention modalities will be integral in halting the pandemic.

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