

PrEP FACT SHEET



WHAT DOES PrEP ACCESS THROUGH THE PHARMACEUTICAL BENEFITS SCHEME (PBS) MEAN?

WHAT IS PrEP?

HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is the regular use of HIV medication by HIV negative people at high risk of HIV to prevent HIV infection. Clinical trials show that PrEP is highly effective at preventing HIV transmission.

IS PrEP AVAILABLE THROUGH AUSTRALIA'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM?

On 9 February, the Department of Health announced that PrEP would be subsidised by the Australian Government through the PBS. The date for actual access through the PBS (known as the listing date) has not been announced but we are expecting an announcement shortly. You will be able to access PrEP through the Australian healthcare system from the listing date. The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) understands that the listing date will be in the first half of the 2018 calendar year.

IS PrEP ALREADY AVAILABLE IN AUSTRALIA?

Yes. ACT, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia set up trials to provide access to PrEP for people at high risk of HIV. Currently, around 14,000 people are enrolled in these access trials.

Alternatively, you can access PrEP through personal importation (see <https://www.afao.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/PrEP-Access-Options-2017.pdf>). This is an option for people who are ineligible for Medicare and unable to access PrEP through the PBS. The cost of personal importation per month is around the same as for a general patient PBS co-payment (approx. \$40 per month).

WILL MY DOCTOR BE ABLE TO PRESCRIBE PrEP THROUGH THE PBS?

Any doctor or general practitioner (GP) can prescribe PrEP through the PBS to an Australian resident who holds a current Medicare card. State and Territory-based AIDS Councils, People With HIV (PWHIV) organisations and other community organisations can assist you in finding inclusive and informed doctors who can discuss PrEP with you. The Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM) is preparing information resources to support the clinical workforce in the lead up to, and following, the listing date.

AM I ELIGIBLE FOR PrEP?

People who are at high risk of HIV are eligible for PrEP. In Australia, sexually active gay and bisexual men, transgender people and heterosexual people with an HIV positive partner who does not have an undetectable viral load are population groups that are at high risk. If you are not using PrEP and you think you are at high risk of HIV you should see your doctor or visit a sexual health clinic to assess your eligibility. ASHM, in consultation with AFAO and other HIV community organisations, has developed PrEP clinical guidelines. These guidelines have been developed to assist doctors to make decisions about prescribing PrEP.

WILL LOCAL PHARMACIES BE ABLE TO DISPENSE PrEP?

Yes, all pharmacies will be able to dispense PrEP; however, some pharmacies may need to order the medication, which may take a few days.

WHAT IS THE PBS CO-PAYMENT?

Individuals with a current Medicare card and a valid script from their doctor who purchase PrEP at a pharmacy will have to pay a PBS co-payment, as with all other medications on the PBS. Co-payments are financial contributions made by PBS eligible consumers towards the cost of dispensing medication.

The PBS classifies people into two categories for the purposes of co-payments: concessional patients or general patients. Concessional patients are individuals with a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card. These people will pay a PBS co-payment of \$6.40 for 30-days' supply of PrEP. General patients will be charged \$39.50 for 30-days' supply.

HOW MUCH PrEP MEDICATION WILL BE PRESCRIBED AND SUPPLIED THROUGH THE PBS?

Doctors can prescribe up to three months' supply of PrEP at a time through the PBS. This is one script with two repeats.

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HOW OFTEN DO I NEED TO VISIT MY DOCTOR FOR AN HIV AND STI TEST?

Individuals will need to see their doctor every three months to obtain another PrEP script. At this visit, your doctor will test you for HIV and other STIs.

WHAT IF I AM ENROLLED IN A PrEP ACCESS TRIAL?

At some point, participants enrolled in PrEP access trials will transition from receiving a trial script for PrEP to receiving a PBS script for PrEP. There should be very few changes when PrEP shifts to the PBS: you will still need to see your doctor or nurse every 3 months for a script as well as HIV and STI tests.

Participants in PrEP access trials will be provided with information on the timing of this transition from the trial. Depending on which trial you are in, and the planned length of that trial, arrangements may vary between States and Territories. State and Territory health departments are making every effort to ensure a smooth transition from access trials to the PBS.

In the meantime, if you are currently accessing PrEP through a trial, or through personal importation, continue to access it as normal until further information becomes available.

For more information about PrEP and access options in each State and Territory, please see the following links:

ACT	http://www.aidsaction.org.au/news/232-act-access-to-prep.html
NSW	https://endinghiv.org.au/stay-safe/prep https://www.positivelife.org.au/
Northern Territory	https://www.ntahc.org.au/node/557
Queensland	https://quac.org.au/sexual-health/comeprepd https://www.qpp.org.au/prevention-transforming-hiv/prep
South Australia	https://www.samesh.org.au/prep.html
Tasmania	http://www.tascahrd.org.au/about-prep
Victoria	https://www.vac.org.au/hiv-aids/pre-exposure-prophylaxis-prep http://livingpositivevictoria.org.au
Western Australia	http://www.waids.com/hiv/where-to-get-prep.html
AFAO	https://www.afao.org.au/about-hiv/hiv-prevention/prep
ASHM	http://www.ashm.org.au

A link to the Register of public sexual health clinics in Australia can be found here:

<https://www.racp.edu.au/fellows/resources/sexual-health-medicine-resources>