

# PEP 101

If you may have been exposed to HIV\* in the last 72 hours, talk to your health care provider, an emergency room doctor, or your local health department about PEP right away. PEP can reduce your chance of becoming HIV-positive.

## What Is PEP?

- PEP, or post-exposure prophylaxis, means taking medicines after you may have been exposed to HIV to prevent becoming infected.
- **PEP must be started within 72 hours (3 days) after you may have been exposed to HIV.** But the sooner you start PEP, the better. Every hour counts!
- If your health care provider prescribes PEP, you'll need to take it once or twice daily for 28 days.
- PEP is effective in preventing HIV, but not 100%. Always use condoms with sex partners and use safe injection practices.



## Is PEP Right For You?

If you're HIV-negative or don't know your HIV status, and in the last **72 hours** you



- May have been exposed to HIV during sex (for example, if the condom broke),
- Shared needles and works to prepare drugs, or
- Were sexually assaulted,



Talk to your health care provider, an emergency room doctor, or your local health department about PEP right away.

## Can I Take a Round of PEP Every Time I Have Sex Without a Condom?



- No. PEP should be used only in emergency situations.
- If you are at very high risk for HIV, ask your health care provider about daily medicine to prevent HIV, called pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).



*\* People are exposed to HIV by coming into contact with certain body fluids of a person with HIV, including blood, semen, and vaginal fluids. This usually happens through vaginal or anal sex or by sharing needles.*

For more information please visit [www.cdc.gov/hiv](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv)