

Ireland PrEP Campaign Fact Sheet

This fact sheet was created by ACT UP Dublin as a resource for individuals and groups advocating for access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in Ireland. You are welcome to use this information in creating your own materials and in planning activities.

We will update this document periodically, the most current version will be available in the resources section of our website (actupdublin.com). You can contact us by email at act.up.dublin@gmail.com.

Campaign Objectives (long term)

- Access to affordable PrEP and clinical support services for anyone at risk for HIV
- HSE reimbursement for Truvada as PrEP or generic equivalent (when available)

Campaign Objectives (short term)

- Educate communities about PrEP and the impact it can have on the HIV epidemic
- Accessible, competent and reliable medical services for those currently using PrEP
- Demand Gilead Sciences reduce price of Truvada to facilitate wider access

Pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, is a safe and highly effective way for HIV-negative people to prevent HIV by taking a daily pill.

- PrEP is recommended as a prevention option for people at substantial risk of HIV by the World Health Organization, the US Centers for Disease Control, UNAIDS and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.
- Currently only one medication has been approved for use as PrEP. That medication—marketed under the brand name Truvada—is a combination of two anti-retroviral drugs, tenofovir and emtricitabine.
- Truvada is also used for HIV treatment in combination with other anti-retroviral drugs.
- PrEP protects against HIV but not against other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

HIV diagnoses are increasing in Ireland but PrEP offers a powerful way to prevent new transmissions.

- Condoms have been our main HIV prevention method for 30 years. While condoms have been extremely successful, they have not been enough to stop HIV alone.
- In 2016 the number of new HIV diagnoses in Ireland was the highest ever recorded.
- New options like PrEP won't replace condoms and other risk-reduction approaches, but will be additional tools to help meet the wide range of needs in the real world.

Used correctly, PrEP offers nearly complete protection against HIV.

- Taken daily, PrEP reduces a person's risk of contracting HIV by more than 99%.
- PrEP is at least as effective as condoms at preventing HIV transmission and offers an alternative for people whose condom use is not perfectly consistent.
- PrEP can provide protection even if you occasionally miss a dose.
- PrEP should be used only with proper medical support.
- Before starting PrEP it's important to have HIV, kidney and hepatitis B tests and to have regular HIV, STI and kidney tests as long as you continue to use it.
- Both the PROUD study in the UK and the IPERGAY study in France found that making PrEP available to men at substantial risk of HIV reduced the number of new transmissions by 86%. (Men who contracted HIV during these studies were not using PrEP at the time.)

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The HSE is engaged in a process to make PrEP available in Ireland, but there's no indication of how long this will take.

- Truvada was approved for use as PrEP in the European Union in August, 2016.
- As part of National Sexual Health Strategy, a working group is developing guidance for PrEP in Ireland that will include criteria for who is eligible for PrEP through the HSE.
- After the national guidelines are approved, the HSE will assess whether or not the state should reimburse the cost of the medication. There may be further negotiations with Gilead, the manufacturer of Truvada, about price.

Truvada has been approved for use as PrEP in 6 countries around the world and was approved for the European Union in August of 2016.

- PrEP is currently available through the national health systems in France and Norway.
- Belgium, Scotland and Portugal are in the process of making PrEP available through their national healthcare systems.
- Demonstration projects are planned or ongoing in the Netherlands and Italy.
- NHS England recently announced that it would make PrEP available through a large demonstration project that would enrol up to 10,000 people in the next 3 years.
- The US was the first country to approve the use of Truvada as PrEP in 2012. It is available through private and state insurance schemes. PrEP has been approved in Australia and Canada but is not yet available through the national healthcare systems.
- Currently more than 100,000 people worldwide are using or have used PrEP, but that is only a fraction of the number who could benefit from access.

PrEP should be an option for anyone concerned about HIV.

- People who might want to use PrEP to reduce their risk of contracting HIV include people with HIV-positive partners, sexually active gay & bisexual men, trans people who have sex with men, sex workers, or injection drug users and their partners.
- Guidelines for PrEP access should not be overly restrictive and should allow flexibility for prescribers and users to evaluate if PrEP is appropriate for an individual.

A growing number of people in Ireland are already using PrEP.

- Doctors can prescribe PrEP, but a 30-day supply of Truvada costs hundreds of euros.
- It's not legal to import medications by mail in Ireland, but some people have found ways to source lower-cost generic versions of Truvada available in overseas pharmacies. A recent study from London tested generic equivalents to Truvada and confirmed that all samples obtained from known manufacturers were genuine and contained the correct active ingredients.
- Although they do not formally offer PrEP-support services, Dublin's Gay Men's Health Service and the GUIDE Clinic at St. James's can provide the needed medical tests for people using PrEP. The Mater Hospital will open a dedicated PrEP-support clinic in the near future. Private doctors are able to provide all of the necessary monitoring as well.