



HIV and PrEP

HIV Treatment as Prevention

HIV and PrEP

The global fight against HIV is focusing on concepts of expanding testing programmes and Treatment as Prevention to combat the spread of this incurable disease. Despite widespread knowledge of how to prevent acquisition of HIV there were 512 new diagnoses of HIV in Ireland in 2016. This is a 6% increase on 2016 numbers, and demonstrates a 60% increase over the last 5 years.

In 2016, two-thirds of new diagnoses (of known transmission route) were in the male or transgender person who has sex with men category. This is a marked increase on recent years, with data from 2014 and 2015 reporting approximately half of HIV diagnoses in this category. The use of antiretroviral therapy by at risk populations as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is one of the tools that can help to prevent HIV transmission.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis means prevention before exposure. PrEP for HIV involves HIV negative people taking antiretroviral drugs before sex to reduce the risk of acquiring HIV. Currently approved PrEP is composed of the antiretroviral medications tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) and emtricitabine, combined in a single pill called Truvada™, on an ongoing basis before sex. It does not protect a person from STI's. Other precautions (condoms) need to be taken to prevent STI's.

PrEP is a highly effective way for HIV-negative people to prevent acquiring HIV by taking a daily pill. PrEP is recommended as a prevention option for people at substantial risk of HIV acquisition by the World Health Organization, the US Centers for Disease Control and UNAIDS.

Who needs PrEP?

PrEP is taken by someone who doesn't have HIV but may be at risk of contracting HIV because of sex practices.

How does PrEP work and are there side effects?

The PrEP drugs prevent HIV from entering cells within the body and from replicating. This stops HIV from establishing itself and stops the person taking PrEP from becoming infected with HIV. Side effects like tiredness, nausea and headache can occur but the treatment is generally well tolerated.

What is the difference between PrEP and PEP?

PrEP is not the same as PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) which is a combination of HIV/antiretroviral drugs to prevent HIV after a potential exposure to the virus.

What research has been done on PrEP before?

Clinical trials studied the PrEP drug, Truvada™ and have shown that PrEP can be taken either daily (PROUD study) or taken before and after sex (event-driven) (IPERGAY study). Both of these studies showed that PrEP dramatically reduced the risk of HIV infection by approximately 86%. Currently available data show that PrEP users are sufficiently protected against HIV if the drug is taken correctly. PrEP does not provide protection against other STI's. Truvada™, in combination with safer sex practices, was licenced for use as PrEP in the United States in 2012 and in Europe in 2016.





HIV and PrEP

HIV Treatment as Prevention

Useful Webpage Links:

1. <http://www.hivireland.ie/> (HIV Ireland- support group for people living with HIV)
2. <http://www.man2man.ie/> (Sexual health information for men)
3. <http://hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/sexhealth/gmhs/> (Gay Men's Health Service & support for MSM)
4. <http://www.hpsc.ie/A-Z/HIVSTIs/HIVandAIDS/> (Sexual health statistics and information for Ireland)
5. <http://gayswitchboard.ie/> (LGBT+ support services in Ireland)
6. <http://www.glen.ie/> (GLEN is a policy and strategy focused NGO for lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Ireland)
7. <http://www.belongto.org/> (BelongTo is a youth group for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender young people in Ireland)
8. <http://outhouse.ie/> (Dublin's community and resource centre for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people)
9. <http://www.gay-ireland.com/> (Ireland's gay website with chat, personal ads city guides and fun features)
10. <https://positivenow.ie> (Irish people living with HIV advocacy group)
11. <https://Knownow.ie> (Community and peer based HIV rapid HIV test pilot)
12. <https://www.iwantprepnw.co.uk> (Information on PrEP)

Organisations listed as community advocacy and support sites

- Belong To, 13 Parliament Street, Dublin 2, D02 P658
- AIDS West, Ozanam House, St Augustine Street, Galway,
- GOSHH, Redwood Place, 18 Davis Street, Limerick, V94 K377
- Outhouse, 105 Capel St, Rotunda, Dublin 1
- Sexual Health Centre, 18 Peters Street, Cork
- Positive Now, 70 Eccles Street, Dublin 7, D07 A977
- HIV Ireland, 70 Eccles Street, Dublin 7, D07 A977





HIV and PrEP

HIV Treatment as Prevention

HIV MOLECULAR RESEARCH GROUP (HMRG)

Established by Dr Paddy Mallon in 2008, the HMRG, is internationally recognized for its collaborative, translational research aimed at maintaining long term health in people living with HIV receiving antiretroviral therapy and research into models of testing to increase early diagnosis of HIV and implementation of HIV prevention strategies.

Based at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital campus, the group comprises researchers with laboratory, statistical and clinical research expertise. It is funded through a number of streams including the Health Research Board, the US National Institute of Health and several industry supporters

Website: www.ucd.ie/medicine/HIVMRG
Email: hivmrg@ucd.ie
Twitter: @HIVMRG

