



PrEP

AT THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

If your doctor has never heard of PrEP, you might explain it to them and share some resources:

PrEP is a pill you take to block HIV from staying in your body if you're exposed. Here are a few resources you can show a doctor:

- www.thesexyouwant.ca/prep
- www.catie.ca/fact-sheets/prevention/pre-exposure-prophylaxis-prep

Tell your doctor why you'd like to go on PrEP. Think of the reasons that apply to you and talk honestly about them.

- I have a hard time sticking to condoms, even if I want to
- I'm having sex with poz guys, either because we're hooking up or dating
- I have sex when I'm drunk or high
- I like to hook up with a lot of guys
- I don't always use condoms
- I don't know the status of the guys I'm hooking up with, and I can't always talk about it with them
- There are things in my past that make it hard for me to make the decisions I want to when it comes to sex
- Guys pressure me into having sex without condoms. Some say they're negative, or that they're on PrEP, and it's easy to give in
- I want to take control over my sexual health and PrEP will help me do that
- I've been sexually assaulted and I want to protect myself
- I'm working as an escort, rentboy, or sex worker

Different doctors know different things about PrEP, and some might be more supportive than others. It's their job to ask about the different things that affect your health, so they know what to say.

Here are some things your doctor might say to you:

Your doctor may bring up a few things as a part of determining if you're a good candidate:

- Why don't you use condoms?
- Did you know that it's recommend to use condoms on PrEP anyway?

- PrEP requires a routine: You have to take PrEP every day at the same time, and you have to get tested every three months for HIV and STIs.

If you don't always use condoms, tell them what really happens and why:

- I like having sex but it isn't always easy for me to use condoms.
- Sometimes guys don't want to talk about condom use.
- I'm encountering guys who don't want to use condoms more often, and it's hard to insist.
- Sometimes guys tell me that they're negative or on PrEP, so I don't ask for a condom.
- Sometimes I'm not totally with it in the moment I'm hooking up, because of the heat of the moment or because I've had a lot to drink.
- If I can protect myself in advance, I want to do it.
- I've been in situations where men have fucked me without a condom without my permission.
- I've been in situations that make talking about what I want really hard for me.
- Like women who are on birth control, I want to use a different method to look after my sexual health than just condoms.

Your doctor might also bring up the price, which is quite high.

Truvada is still quite expensive, but there are generics available that are just as effective. Tell your doctor that you would like the generic to cut down on costs.

If you have private insurance your PrEP will be covered according to your insurance policy. Be sure to let your doctor know that you have private insurance.

If insurance is not an option for you, the Trillium Drug Program, Ontario Disability Support Program, and Ontario Works can help cover the cost. Trillium requires you to pay a deductible equal to about 3-4% of your annual household income. If you are under 25, you can also get PrEP completely covered through the OHIP+ program. These programs all require a valid Ontario health card.

Some doctors may worry that they're giving you permission to have sex without condoms, take chances they don't think you should be taking, or have lots of sex.

Make sure you explain that for whatever reason, only using condoms is not working for you. Your sexual health will be in better shape if you have PrEP as one of your sexual health strategies.

What if my doctor says no?

Hopefully your doctor won't say no. There are a few reasons doctors might not want to prescribe PrEP: they may not know about HIV and PrEP, may not feel comfortable prescribing HIV treatments, or they may feel you are not eligible based on the guidelines they are using.

If they do say no, even though you're sure you want to go on PrEP, you can ask for a referral to speak with someone who knows more about HIV and PrEP. Or, go to a different clinic. You can contact HIV/AIDS service organizations in your community. They might know of other providers in who are prescribing PrEP.