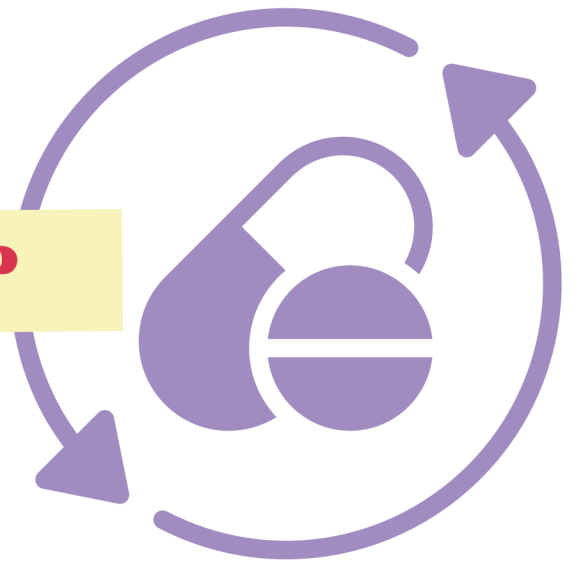


Preventing STIs

With Doxy PEP



Doxy PEP, or **doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis**, is a sexual health strategy that involves taking an oral antibiotic after condomless sex to prevent three sexually transmitted infections (STIs)—chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis.

Doxy PEP is the first new prevention method for bacterial STIs, and many experts believe it will be an important tool in our fight against this epidemic. The CDC is still working on its official guidelines for doxy PEP, but this is what we know so far.

- Doxy PEP is intended for adult men who have sex with men and transgender women who have sex with men, especially those who have had an STI in the last year.
- Health care providers may also suggest it to people in this community who have more than one partner.

Using Doxy PEP

People using doxy PEP take 200 mg of doxycycline (usually two 100 mg pills) within 72 hours of condomless sex, though sooner is better. Doxy PEP can be used every time you have condomless sex, but you shouldn't take more than 200 mg of doxycycline in a 24-hour period.

There is still a lot of research to be done on this new strategy, but early studies show that **it can reduce the risk of syphilis and chlamydia by 80% or more and reduce the risk of gonorrhea by 50%**. The research that has been done so far has not found that doxy PEP increases drug resistance in patients, but scientists will have to keep monitoring it because of concerns about potential antibiotic resistance.

What about Side Effects?

Doxycycline is a common antibiotic that many of us have taken for other infections. Like other antibiotics, it may upset your stomach. Take it with lots of water and try not to lie down for half an hour. Doxycycline may also make you more sensitive to the sun so you should try to avoid prolonged exposure while taking it. Some people may have more serious reactions. Talk to a health care provider if you have other symptoms—like a bad headache or blurred vision—after taking it.

What about Antibiotic Resistance?

Overuse of antibiotics can be a problem because it can lead to antibiotic-resistant bacteria (infections that don't respond to the drugs we have to treat them). The research that has been done so far has not found that doxy PEP increases drug resistance in patients, but scientists will have to keep monitoring it.

Do I Still Need to Get Tested for STIs?

Yes. It's important to keep up with STI screenings and to get checked if you have any symptoms. Talk to your health care provider about how often you should be screened.