# CDC Encourages Health Care Providers to “Prescribe HIV Prevention”

The federal initiative aims to help clinicians and their patients understand and access PrEP and PEP.

October 18, 2018 By Trent Straube

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Our nation’s federal health agency has a message for health care providers: Prescribe HIV prevention. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched a new initiative titled exactly that: “Prescribe HIV Prevention.”

Specifically, the initiative promotes pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis (PreP and PEP). Currently, there is one form of PrEP: Truvada, a daily tablet that can keep an HIV-negative person from getting HIV. PEP refers to the regimen of antiretroviral meds that can be taken within 72 hours of a potential exposure to HIV to avoid contracting the virus.

Scientists estimate that when Truvada is taken daily as PrEP, it reduces the risk of contracting HIV by 99 percent or more among men who have sex with men and 90 percent or more among women. (The risk reduction for women may very well be greater than 90 percent, but there isn’t sufficient research available to refine the estimate.)

A brochure from the “Prescribe HIV Prevention” campaignCourtesy of CDC/Act Against AIDS

The new CDC campaign, which is part of its “Act Against AIDS” initiative, educates providers about

these biomedical prevention tools and encourages them to consider PrEP and PEP for their patients. The campaign also includes guides for discussing sexual health.

Materials available through the Prescribe HIV Prevention initiative include resources and training for clinicians (including Medscape roundtables) along with journal articles, brochures, guidelines, tool kits, frequently asked questions and information on paying for PrEP and PEP.

Other resources include brochures that health care providers can download and give to their patients and posters they can hang in their offices. Printed materials can also be ordered.

A poster from the “Prescribe HIV Prevention” campaignCourtesy of CDC/Act Against AIDS

To learn more about PrEP and PEP—including an interactive lesson on HIV/AIDS—read the POZ Basics on HIV Prevention.

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