PrEPHer Urges Women: Know Your HIV Status and Protect Yourself

With Black, brown and queer women in mind, the Normal Anomaly's PrEPHer program offers free self-testing kits for HIV and sexually trasmitted infections (STIs).

March 14, 2025 By Trent Straube

To empower women to prevent HIV and protect their sexual health, the Normal Anomaly Initiative—a Texas-based advocacy group that serves Black and queer people in the South—launched the PrEPHer program.

PrEPHer encourages Black, brown and queer women to learn their HIV status, take control of their health and get educated about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent HIV. PrEPHer offers a free self-testing kit that screens for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections [STIs], including chlamydia, gonorrhea, hepatitis C, herpes simplex 2, syphilis and trichomoniasis.

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“Ladies, there is so much that we can do about our sexual health and wellness,” reads a PrEPHer notice on the Normal Anomaly’s Facebook page. “The first thing is to know our status, and not just HIV, but other STIs as well. Connect with us to get your free five panel test!!!”

Supported by pharma giant Gilead Sciences, PrEPHer debuted in March to coincide with Women’s History Month.



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“We cannot ignore the barriers women—especially Black and Brown women—face when it comes to accessing lifesaving HIV prevention tools,” said Shavonne Jaquess-Smith, the Normal Anomaly’s senior program manager, in a PrEPHer press release. “It’s both empowering and revolutionary for women to take charge of their sexual well-being in a society that too often imposes stigma and shame.”

In 2021, women made up 18% of new HIV diagnoses, yet only 8% of PrEP users were women. What’s more, Black women continue to be disproportionately impacted by HIV, accounting for 54% of new HIV infections in U.S. women, despite making up 14% of the female population.

“At the Normal Anomaly, we believe every woman deserves the opportunity to take proactive control of her health with confidence and dignity,” states the initiative’s press release. “PrEP is for any woman who wants to prioritize her peace of mind and well-being, whether you are single, in a committed relationship or navigating life’s complexities, this initiative places the power in your

hands. Our commitment to providing accessible care and cultivating an inclusive, judgment-free community ensures that every woman, regardless of her background or circumstances, feels supported and empowered on her health journey."



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The PrEPHer initiative complements the Normal Anomaly's other community-based empowering initiatives including Drag University and BQAF Week 2025 (April 25 to May 4, including a music festival May 3 in Houston). To read about the group's previous events, see "Black Queer AF Media Tour Brings Culture and HIV Awareness Across the South."

In related news, Monday, March 10, marked the 20th annual National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. For similar news, click #Women and also check out our March cover story: "Be the Light: Bridgette Picou, a nurse living with HIV, helps women advocate for themselves."

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