

## If something goes wrong...

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If you think you have been exposed to HIV, there is, in a few places, a treatment available that may prevent HIV infection. This is called post-exposure prophylaxis, or PEP.

In Australia, at the time of writing, PEP is available for non-occupational exposures to HIV (such as through sex or injecting drug use) only in NSW, Queensland and the ACT, and through one hospital in Victoria. In many other countries it is not available at all, or you have to pay the full cost of the treatment. PEP is a course of anti-HIV drugs taken at specific times of the day for a period of four weeks. PEP does not guarantee prevention of HIV infection. However, research shows that PEP may significantly decrease the chances of infection after exposure to HIV.

The drugs used are the same as those used to treat people who are already HIV positive. They can often cause unpleasant side effects.

PEP is most effective when taken immediately or within a couple of hours after exposure to HIV. However, PEP may still be effective if taken within 72 hours.

If you think you have been exposed to HIV you should seek medical advice as soon as possible. Where it is available in Australia, PEP can be accessed through sexual health clinics or doctors who specialise in HIV/AIDS, or through hospital accident and emergency departments. In other countries you could contact a local HIV/AIDS organisation or gay health service to find out if PEP is available. These are usually listed in gay newspapers, magazines and travel guides.

[◀ What to expect](#) [1][up](#) [2]

- [Post-exposure prophylaxis \(PEP\)](#)

### Links:

[1] <http://napwa.org.au/resource/at-home-away/what-to-expect>

[2] <http://napwa.org.au/node/241>