

**What is Doxy PEP?**

Doxy PEP is also known as Doxycycline Post-Exposure Prophylaxis. Doxycycline is an antibiotic commonly used to treat bacterial infections. Doxy PEP can prevent bacterial sexually transmitted infections (STIs) like syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea when taken after sex without a condom or other barrier protection. Doxy PEP does not prevent HIV, mpox, or other viral infections.

**Is Doxy PEP effective?**

* Doxy PEP is highly effective at preventing syphilis, chlamydia, and to a lesser extent, gonorrhea.
* Research trials and real-world observations have shown that Doxy PEP reduces the risk of getting bacterial STIs by about two-thirds among men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender women who have sex with men.
* Studies on effectiveness in cisgender women, cisgender heterosexual men, transgender men and other queer and nonbinary individuals are ongoing.
* Doxy PEP is well tolerated with minimal side effects.

**What are the benefits of Doxy PEP?**

Doxy PEP can prevent syphilis, chlamydia, and to a lesser extent, gonorrhea, when taken after sex without a condom or other barrier protection. Many people taking Doxy PEP report a decrease in anxiety and stigma associated with STIs. For some people, using Doxy PEP can be empowering, facilitate sex positivity, and allow individuals to take charge of their own sexual health.

**What are the risks of Doxy PEP?**

**Possible Side Effects**

* Sun sensitivity
* Esophagus and stomach irritation

**Other Possible Risks**

* Antibiotic resistance
* Microbiome changes (changes in the normal bacteria found on your skin, in your stomach, and other parts of your body). Possible changes in your microbiome may have long-term health effects which are currently unknown.

**How do I take Doxy PEP?**

If doxy PEP is prescribed for you, health care providers usually recommend the following:

* Take 200 mg of doxycycline orally ideally within 24 hours - but no later than 72 hours - after condomless oral, anal, or vaginal/front hole sex.
* Take with a full glass of water/liquid sitting upright. If your stomach is upset by doxycycline, taking it with food may help.
* Do not take more than 200 mg of doxycycline within a 24-hour period.
* Doxy PEP can be taken as often as every day, depending on sexual activity.
* Use sun protection – doxycycline may cause the skin to be more sensitive to sunlight.

**How else can I protect myself?**

Doxy PEP is just one part a of a comprehensive safer sex plan. Additional ways to protect yourself include using condoms, reducing numbers of partners, regular testing and treatment for STI/HIV if you test positive, taking HIV PrEP, and getting vaccinated against STIs.

**How do I access Doxy PEP?**

Reach out to your provider to discuss Doxy PEP or visit the [Care that Fits You](https://carethatfitsyou.org/) website to find a sexual health provider in Massachusetts.

Adapted from:

<https://kingcounty.gov/~/media/depts/health/communicable-diseases/documents/hivstd/DoxyPEP-facts.ashx?la=en>