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Taking PrEP and recreational drugs together can increase the risk of side effects due to the medications affecting each other’s metabolism. If you are using recreational drugs, inform your doctor, as they can explain the risks and provide guidance on how to minimize them. For accurate information on the potential interactions between certain substances, consult the Frank website or a medical professional. In an interview with Bhekisisa editor Mia Malan, infectious diseases specialist Kevin Rebe discussed the do’s and don’ts of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). PrEP involves taking a two-in-one tablet containing tenofovir and emtricitabine to prevent HIV infection if exposed. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) won’t be necessary if you’re in a relationship with both partners being HIV negative. However, in discordant relationships where one person is HIV positive and the other is HIV negative, using PrEP would be wise. In South Africa, certain groups such as adolescent girls, young women, commercial sex workers, and men who have sex with men are at a higher risk of contracting HIV and should be prioritized for PrEP use. PrEP only protects against HIV infection, not other sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy, so condoms and contraception must still be used. It’s safe to take PrEP with oral contraception, but there may be risks associated with pregnancy while using the medication. The majority of people on PrEP experience no side effects, though some minor issues like bloating or nausea can occur and typically subside within a few weeks. A medical professional will monitor your kidney function while you’re taking PrEP, as Tenofovir can potentially affect it. Your general practitioner (GP) can prescribe PrEP after testing you for HIV and assessing your risk level, and they’ll also counsel you on safer sex practices. Medical aids are starting to cover the cost of PrEP, with some already offering coverage for six months. A month’s supply of PrEP typically costs around R600 retail, but a generic version will be available soon for approximately R200-R220 per month. The health department aims to purchase PrEP in bulk at lower prices. Currently, PrEP is not available through the state sector, although it may become accessible at some clinics for sex workers and possibly other high-risk groups in the future. Some people may worry that PrEP makes individuals more promiscuous, but this concern is unfounded as responsible use of PrEP requires continued safer sex practices. One concern researchers and scientists are grappling with is whether individuals on Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) become complacent in their behavior due to a perceived false sense of security. This raises questions about potential increases in risk-taking behaviors, such as having more sexual partners or abandoning condom use. However, clinical trials have shown that PrEP participants do not exhibit increased risky behavior; they continue using condoms and show no rise in sexually transmitted infections. Taking PrEP while HIV-positive can lead to complications. Truvada, commonly used for PrEP, may not work effectively as an antiretroviral drug if taken by someone who is already infected with the virus. This is because the medication can facilitate the development of viral resistance. Therefore, it’s crucial to confirm a negative HIV status before starting PrEP. Additionally, there’s a window period after HIV infection during which antibody tests may not detect the infection due to the body taking time to produce antibodies. Incorrect use or non-adherence to PrEP can also lead to infection and potential drug resistance. Current trials are exploring other antiretroviral drugs for PrEP beyond Truvada, aiming to reduce the risk of resistance by using separate drugs for prevention and treatment. Future research may introduce new delivery methods, such as injectable PrEP, which could be more convenient for some users. It’s essential to take PrEP correctly under a healthcare provider’s guidance, especially since daily adherence is crucial for its effectiveness. PrEP comes in tablet form and can be taken either daily or on demand based on sexual activity. For daily use, individuals should start taking the tablets 7 days before any sex and continue each day around the same time, ideally with food. If an individual expects to have sex within the first week, they should take two tablets at least 2 hours beforehand and then resume the daily regimen. Taking PrEP: A Guide to Dosage and Administration • \*\*After taking a dose\*\*: Do not take another tablet within one hour. • \*\*Difficulty swallowing tablets\*\*: Crush the tablet and mix it with water, orange juice, or grape juice. • \*\*Missing doses\*\*: Take the missed dose as soon as possible, but no more than 12 hours after the scheduled time. If over 12 hours late, skip that dose and resume on schedule. • \*\*Missed doses in a week\*\*: For full protection, have taken at least 6 daily doses in the past week. If you miss more than 2 doses, consult your doctor. • \*\*Dosing frequency\*\*: Do not exceed 7 pills in one week unless starting with 2 doses. Consider setting reminders to ensure timely dosing. • \*\*PrEP time tracking app\*\*: Utilize this tool for tablet reminders and tracking daily or on-demand doses when forgetting frequently. • \*\*Stopping PrEP\*\*: After having vaginal/frontal sex, take the next dose after 7 days. For PrEP on-demand (anal sex only), follow specific guidelines to avoid liver inflammation. • \*\*Hepatitis B concerns\*\*: Avoid using PrEP on demand if you have hepatitis B, as it can worsen the condition. • \*\*PrEP on demand instructions\*\*: Take 2 tablets before anal sex, 1 tablet 24 hours later, and 1 tablet after that. Continue daily dosing every 24 hours until not having sex for 2 days. • \*\*Duration of PrEP use\*\*: As long as regular tests are conducted, you can take PrEP for an extended period. If your clinic doctor expresses concerns about your blood test results while on PrEP treatment, they may suggest stopping your medication. However, even missing a dose or two within the first 7 days of starting PrEP will still provide protection. If taking daily PrEP, ensure at least six doses were taken in the previous week to maintain protection. Important: Do not take more than three PrEP tablets simultaneously. In case of an emergency, seek immediate medical attention. Go to 111.nhs.uk or dial 111 for guidance. If you require hospital care, do not drive yourself; instead, ask someone to drive you or call 999 to request an ambulance. Be sure to bring the PrEP medication, any remaining doses, and all your prescribed medications with you.

When should i take prep. What is the best time to take prenatal. What time should i take prep. How often do you take prep. Should i take prep in the morning or night. What is the best time to take a. How to take prep on demand.