

## Other Pharmacy Services

### POST-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PEP):

is a combination of medicines that can protect an HIV negative person from HIV infection. PEP must be started within 36 hours of the exposure and taken daily for 28 days. A visit to the emergency room is usually required to get PEP. But in NYS, some pharmacies can provide the first several days of medication to get you started quickly. The pharmacist will link you with a medical provider so you can have the laboratory tests and medications needed to finish the treatment.

**SYRINGE ACCESS:** If you or someone you know injects drugs, there are ways to reduce the risk of infections. Pharmacists registered with the Expanded Syringe Access Program (ESAP) may sell or provide up to 10 syringes at a time to adults, 18 years or older, without a prescription.

**OPIOID OVERDOSE RESCUE:** Naloxone is a medication that reverses overdoses from opioids such as heroin and prescription painkillers. New Yorkers can get this medication without a prescription from participating pharmacies. If you or someone you know uses opioids, fentanyl or heroin, ask your pharmacist about getting and carrying this life saving medication.

**VACCINATIONS:** Vaccines are recommended for most adults, including those with HIV. Many pharmacists can provide vaccinations right at the pharmacy. Talk to your pharmacist about what vaccinations you may need and whether they are available at your pharmacy.

## Take Home Points



- Learn about the medications you are taking. Know what each medication is and what it does.



- Take your medications as prescribed.
- Refill your prescriptions before you take your last pill.



- You can ask your pharmacy to automatically remind you when your refills are due.



- When you travel: bring enough medication for your whole trip and keep it with you, not in your checked luggage. Ask your pharmacist what to do if you lose your medication while traveling.



- Talk to your pharmacist about options if you need help to pay for your medications and co-payments.



- Keep your pharmacy phone number with you or programmed in your phone.



- Always bring all your prescription coverage cards with you.



- Have your health care provider's phone number handy if you are on Injectable ART in case you have any questions or concerns regarding your treatment.

### Pharmacist's Notes:


Pharmacists are key members of your health care team who are available to help you with your medications. Your partnership with any pharmacist is based on confidentiality, privacy, sensitivity and respect.

# You and Your Pharmacist



## Take Every Dose, Every Day

Taking your medications exactly as prescribed is key to keeping your viral load very low or undetectable. A low viral load causes less damage to your immune system so you can stay healthier, and lowers the risk of transmitting HIV to others.

- Set an alarm on your phone, watch or home clock
- Use pill boxes and calendars
- Keep track of your meds and refills with a smart phone app
- If Injectable ART is your current treatment, set a calendar reminder on your phone for your next appointment.

## Pharmacists Can Help You Get and Stay Healthy

### ASK YOUR PHARMACIST ABOUT:

- REFILL REMINDERS:** to notify you when your medication can be refilled before you run out.
- REFILL MANAGEMENT:** may let you arrange for your medications to be refilled on the same day.
- MEDICATION LIST:** give a list of your current medications to all of your health care providers to keep them up to date on any medication changes. In an emergency, a current list helps medical providers choose treatments that are safe when taken with your medications.
- EDUCATION & ASSISTANCE:** pharmacists can answer questions about your medications, such as possible side effects and how they may affect other medications, vitamins and supplements. They can also help with insurance issues.
- MEDICATION DELIVERY:** some pharmacies deliver medications to your home or another location.
- MAIL ORDER:** some insurers strongly encourage you to get your medications through their mail order pharmacy. However, many insurers will still let you pick up your medications at a local pharmacy if that option is right for you.

If you are on Injectable ART, please make sure to contact your health care provider in regards to any lifestyle changes and about appointments to receive your treatment.

# Frequently Asked Questions

### Is it safe to take my HIV medicine with other medicines?

Not always. Many medications, including HIV medicine, may not work well with other prescription or over the counter medications, herbal remedies, nutritional supplements, and even certain vitamins and minerals. Taking these may make your HIV medication less effective or increase risk of side effects, or both. Check with your pharmacist before beginning any new product.

### Should I take my HIV medication if I drink alcohol or use street drugs?

Most HIV medications are not affected by alcohol but some street drugs may affect your HIV medications. You should still take your HIV medications on schedule, but make sure your health care provider is aware of your drug or alcohol use. Using alcohol or street drugs can affect your immune system or your liver and may make it harder to take your medicine correctly.

### Can I smoke while I'm taking my HIV medicine?

Smoking tobacco does not affect your HIV medications. However, studies show that smoking tobacco shortens your life more than having well controlled HIV. There are medications and programs to help you cut down or quit using tobacco. For more information, call the New York State Smokers Quitline at 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487).

### What if my medicine makes me feel bad?

You may be having side effects, such as a headache, dizziness or upset stomach. Do not stop taking your HIV medication without talking to your pharmacist or health care provider. They can help you manage medication problems.

### What if forget to take my HIV medicine?

The medication information sheet provided by the pharmacy will tell you whether you should take a dose as soon as you can or if it is better to wait until the next time you are supposed to take it. If you are not sure what to do, call your pharmacist or health care provider. If you have trouble remembering to take your daily HIV medication, you might consider speaking with your health care provider or pharmacist about taking injectable ART.

### Should I take my medicines with food or on an empty stomach?

It depends on the medication. Instructions to “take with food” means you can take the medicine just before, right after, or while you are eating. If the medicine needs to be taken 1 hour before or 2 hours after food, it will be written on the bottle.

### What if I can't pay for my HIV medicine?

New York State is committed to getting HIV medication to everyone who needs it, regardless of their insurance coverage, legal status or any other factor. Contact the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP)'s confidential hotline at 1-800-542-2437 or 1-844-682-4058 or talk to your pharmacist about other options.