Cornell Health

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Doxy PEP for STI Prevention

What is Doxy PEP?

Doxycycline Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (Doxy PEP) means taking the antibiotic doxycycline after sex to prevent getting a sexually transmitted infection (STI). It is sometimes referred to as a "morning-after pill for STIs."

Which STIs does Doxy PEP protect against?

When taken within 72 hours of sexual activity, Doxy PEP can help prevent the bacterial STIs syphilis and chlamydia, and (to a lesser degree) gonorrhea.

Doxy PEP does *not* protect against viral infections, including HIV, mpox, HPV, and herpes.

Who is Doxy PEP recommended for?

Doxy PEP is recommended for men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender women – as well as other individuals at higher risk of contracting a bacterial STI (as determined by a healthcare provider) – after condomless sex.

"Condemless sex" means oral, anal, or vaginal sex when a condom isn't used for the entire time.

Doxy PEP should *not* be taken if pregnant.

When / how to take it

Take two 100 mg of doxycycline as soon as possible after condomless sex, but no later than 72 hours after. Taking it as soon as possible may make it more effective.

- Take doxycycline with plenty of water or other fluids and do not lie down for at least 15 minutes after taking it so it doesn't get stuck when you swallow.
- Taking it with food can help prevent stomach upset.
- Avoid dairy products, calcium, antacids, or multivitamins two hours before or after taking doxycycline.
- Some people are more sensitive to the sun when they take doxycycline, so wear sunscreen.

Continuing sexual activity

If you have sex again within 24 hours of taking doxycycline, take another dose 24 hours after your last dose.

You can take doxycycline as often as every day when you are having condomless sex, but do not take more than 200 mg (two 100 mg pills) every 24 hours.

Other considerations

About 25% of gonorrhea in the US is already resistant to doxycycline, and Doxy PEP may not work against these strains. This percentage may increase over time. (There is no known resistance to doxycycline for chlamydia or syphilis.)

We do not yet know whether doxycycline affects normal ("good") bacteria in our intestines, whether it could increase or decrease the bacteria that live on our skin, or cause bacterial resistance to doxycycline (for example, staph).

Reminders

- Continue to routinely screen for STIs: health.cornell.edu/sti.
- Call us at 607-255-5155 if you have any questions or concerns that you may have a STI.