

What is Doxy PEP?

Brown Health Services Patient Education Series

PEP stands for post-exposure prophylaxis. It means taking medication after potentially being exposed to an infection to prevent becoming infected.

- Doxycycline (doxy) is an antibiotic that treats some bacterial sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Taking doxy PEP after a potential exposure to an STI is not 100% effective but it can reduce the risk of transmission of syphilis and chlamydia by 70% and gonorrhea by 50%. Doxy PEP must be taken within 72 hours after possible exposure but the sooner you take it, the better.

Doxy PEP Facts

- Doxy PEP is 200 mg taken in a single dose
- It is not a substitute for regular use of other proven safer sex methods like condoms and oral dams.
- Doxy PEP does not protect against HIV, Mpox or sexually transmitted viral infections such as hepatitis.

Is doxy PEP right for me?

The CDC recommends the following people consider doxy PEP:

- Cisgender men who have sex with men (MSM) who have had a bacterial STI (specifically syphilis, chlamydia or gonorrhea) diagnosed in the past 12 months.

- Transgender women (TW) who have had a bacterial STI (specifically syphilis, chlamydia or gonorrhea) diagnosed in the past 12 months

If potential exposure to STIs is a result of sexual violence, you may have additional concerns besides infection. There are resources available to you including medical care, testing, and other preventive medications, advocacy, support, and/or evidence collection. Call the Sexual Assault Response Line at (401)863-6000 for an immediate crisis response or visit <https://go.brown.edu/resourceguide> for more information.

Does doxy PEP have any side effects?

- Doxycycline is safe but may cause minor side effects such as nausea.
- Do not take more than 200 mg of doxy within 24 hours

Follow-up after taking doxy PEP

- People who are prescribed doxy PEP should have STI testing at sites of exposure (i.e.: throat, genitals, rectum) when it is first prescribed and every 3-6 months ongoing.
- HIV, Hepatitis B and C testing may be considered and can be discussed with your provider.

Brown Sexual Health Resources

Your care at Brown University Health Services is confidential.

- If you think you might need or want to learn more about starting doxy PEP call Health Services at (401) 863-3853 to make an appointment with a provider.
- If you have experienced sexual violence call the Sexual Assault Response Line at (401)863-6000 for an immediate crisis response or visit <https://go.brown.edu/resourceguide> for more information.

References:

Bachmann LH, Barbee LA, Chan P, et al. CDC Clinical Guidelines on the Use of Doxycycline Postexposure Prophylaxis for Bacterial Sexually Transmitted Infection Prevention, United States, 2024. *MMWR Recomm Rep* 2024;73(No. RR-2):1–8. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.rr7302a1>

Luetkemeyer AF et al. Postexposure doxycycline to prevent bacterial sexually transmitted infections. *N Engl J Med* 2023 Apr 6; 388:1296. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa2211934>

National Coalition of STD Directors. Doxy as STI PEP FAQs. 2024. <https://www.ncsddc.org/resource/doxy-as-sti-pep-faqs/>

RIDOH Healthcare Professional Advisory June 11, 2024. CDC Publishes Guidelines Regarding Doxycycline Post-exposure Prophylaxis (Doxy PEP) for Bacterial STI Prevention. Rhode Island Department of Public Health. <https://us2.campaign-archive.com/?u=ece9b1661b3bf3b864a6894d1&id=ad6a1be45a>