

# Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) as safe as aspirin

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PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis, is the first medicine that the Food and Drug Administration has approved to be shown effective to prevent infection with HIV. Nearly 50,000 new cases of HIV occur in the United States every year. Many doctors might be worried about prescribing PrEP for safety reasons.

The researchers reviewed major studies of both PrEP for HIV prevention and aspirin for heart attack prevention. They found that both had similar low rates of serious side effects. Aspirin users rarely had serious bleeding or death and PrEP users rarely had serious kidney or bone damage.

By showing that PrEP might be as safe as aspirin doctors should feel more comfortable prescribing it, and patients should feel more comfortable using it. PrEP works very well to prevent HIV when taken every day. The data also could support efforts to make PrEP available without a prescription as an over-the-counter medication like the Plan B morning-after contraceptive pill or birth control in some places.

**More information:** Noah Kojima et al. Is Emtricitabine-Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis for the Prevention of HIV Infection Safer than Aspirin?, *Open Forum Infectious Diseases* (2016). [DOI: 10.1093/ofid/ofv221](https://doi.org/10.1093/ofid/ofv221)

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