

**National Guidance on the Use of Doxycycline as a Postexposure Prophylaxis (doxy PEP) for Sexually Transmitted Infections**

<b>DATE:</b>	July 18, 2024
<b>TO:</b>	Health Alert Network
<b>FROM:</b>	Debra L. Bogen, M.D., FAAP, Secretary of Health
	<b>National Guidance on the Use of Doxycycline as a Postexposure Prophylaxis (doxy PEP) for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)</b>
<b>DISTRIBUTION:</b>	Statewide
<b>LOCATION:</b>	N/A
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<b>ZIP CODE:</b>	N/A

**This transmission is a “Health Advisory” provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.**

**HOSPITALS:** PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, NURSING AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL; **EMS COUNCILS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **FQHCs:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE **LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP; **LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES:** PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL, AND NURSING STAFF IN YOUR FACILITY

**Summary**

- On June 6, 2024, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published guidance on the use of doxycycline as postexposure prophylaxis (doxy PEP) in certain patient populations to reduce the acquisition of the bacterial STIs chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis.
- Doxycycline is an effective antibiotic to treat bacterial STIs.
- CDC recommends healthcare providers discuss doxy PEP with all gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men and transgender women with a history of at least one bacterial STI (syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea) in the last 12 months.
- If offering doxy PEP, healthcare providers should write a prescription for self-administration of 200 mg of doxycycline within 72 hours of oral, vaginal, or anal sex.
- Data show that for high-risk populations there was a reduction in syphilis and chlamydia infections by >70% and gonococcal infections by approximately 50% when using doxy PEP.
- Physicians needing additional information should call the Department of Health’s Bureau of Communicable Diseases at 717-787-3981

**Background**

On June 6, 2024, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published guidance on the use of chemoprophylaxis for bacterial STIs. Doxycycline is effective in reducing bacterial STIs. Doxycycline should be used as postexposure prophylaxis (doxy PEP) in certain patient populations to reduce the acquisition of the bacterial STIs chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis.

The use of doxy PEP is a novel, ongoing, patient-managed biomedical STI prevention strategy for a selected population. CDC recommends that men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender

women (TGW) who have had a bacterial STI (specifically syphilis, chlamydia, or gonorrhea) diagnosed in the past 12 months should receive counseling that doxy PEP can be used as postexposure prophylaxis to prevent these infections.

### Treatment, Testing, and Counseling Recommendations

- MSM and TGW who are prescribed doxy PEP should be tested for chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and HIV to establish a baseline and routinely tested every 3-6 months thereafter.
- Testing should include:
  - Nucleic acid amplification test for gonorrhea and chlamydia at all anatomic sites of exposure.
  - Serologic testing for syphilis.
  - Serologic testing for HIV, especially if HIV status is unknown.
- Individuals receiving doxy PEP should be counseled on the use of STI and HIV prevention strategies and provided HIV PEP, PrEP or HIV treatment as indicated.
- If doxy PEP is prescribed, the provider should write the prescription for self-administration of the recommended dose of 200 mg of doxycycline (any formulation) to be taken as soon as possible within 72 hours after having oral, vaginal, or anal sex with a maximum dose of 200 mg every 24 hours.
- The prescription should account for enough doses on the basis of the person's anticipated sexual activity until their next visit.
- For persons without HIV infection receiving HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), screen per CDC HIV PrEP guidelines ([www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/risk/prep/cdc-hiv-prep-guidelines-2021.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/risk/prep/cdc-hiv-prep-guidelines-2021.pdf)).

### Additional Information

- Doxy PEP has a demonstrated benefit in reducing incident syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea in certain populations and represents a new approach to addressing STI prevention in MSM and TGW.
- Ongoing studies are being conducted to evaluate doxy PEP and PrEP, including the risk for the development of antimicrobial resistance.
- Currently, the available evidence in the context of increased national incidence of syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea supports consideration of this approach for MSM and TGW at substantial risk for acquiring bacterial STIs.
- Additional information on doxy PEP and STI follow-up testing can be found online at:
  - MMWR, CDC Clinical Guidelines on the Use of Doxycycline Postexposure Prophylaxis or Bacterial Sexually Transmitted Infection Prevention, United States, 2024: [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/rr/pdfs/rr7302a1-H.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/rr/pdfs/rr7302a1-H.pdf)
  - CDC STI Screening Recommendations: [www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/screening-recommendations.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/screening-recommendations.htm)
  - Recommendations for HIV Screening of Gay, Bisexual, and Other Men Who Have Sex with Men — United States, 2017: [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6631a3.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6631a3.htm)
- These guidelines will be updated as additional data become available.

Physicians needing additional information should call the following number:  
Pennsylvania Department of Health  
Bureau of Communicable Diseases  
Division of TB/STD  
STD Program  
(717) 787-3981  
**8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M**

Individuals interested in receiving further PA-HANs are encouraged to register at HAN Notification Registration ([mir3.com](http://mir3.com))

Categories of Health Alert messages:

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of July 18, 2024, but may be modified in the future. We will continue to post updated information regarding the most common questions about this subject.