

# DoxyPEP

## Information for patients

This leaflet explains a medicine that helps stop you from getting certain types of sexually transmitted infection (STI) after sex. If you have any questions, please speak with one of the doctors or nurses in the sexual health clinic.

### What is DoxyPEP?

Doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis (DoxyPEP) is a treatment that involves taking an antibiotic medicine called doxycycline after sex to help stop you from getting certain sexually transmitted infections (STIs) caused by bacteria such as chlamydia and syphilis.

DoxyPEP only works against bacteria and not viruses. This means it will not protect you from HIV or hepatitis B. If you want to learn about how to stay safe from viruses, talk to one of the doctors or nurses in the sexual health clinic.

### Who should take DoxyPEP?

DoxyPEP is helpful for people who are more likely to get STIs. Most evidence about how well it works comes from trials done in men who have sex with men and transgender women. But in some circumstances it may also be appropriate for heterosexual men and women.

You may benefit from taking DoxyPEP if:

- you have sex with new or different partners often
- you do not always use condoms
- you or your partners have had STIs before
- you are part of a community with higher STI rates, such as some gay and bisexual men.

If you are not sure if DoxyPEP is right for you, talk to your local sexual health clinic. They will help you to decide.

### Does DoxyPEP work well?

Research has shown that it can lower your chances of getting chlamydia and syphilis by about 70-85% if you come into contact with the bacteria that cause them.

DoxyPEP does not work as well for gonorrhoea because some types of the bacteria that cause it are becoming harder to treat. Experts are watching this closely.

### Who should NOT take DoxyPEP?

You should not take DoxyPEP if you:

- are allergic to doxycycline or similar antibiotics
- take certain medications such as:
  - acne treatments with vitamin A, such as isotretinoin
  - blood thinners
  - anti-seizure drugs
  - ciclosporin.

- are pregnant or think you might be
- have a confirmed diagnosis of syphilis, chlamydia or any other STI. In this case, you should go to a sexual health for a full course of treatment
- did not take DoxyPEP within 72 hours of sexual risk. This is because DoxyPEP only works if taken as soon as possible after sex and no more than 72 hours after a sexual contact.

Always check with your doctor or nurse to see if DoxyPEP is safe for you.

## How do I take DoxyPEP?

Take **two** capsules (a total of 200mg) as soon as possible after sex, **ideally within 24 hours but no later than 72 hours**.

- Only take **one** dose every 24 hours. If you have sex again, wait 24 hours before taking another dose.
- Take the pills with food and a full glass of water.
- Stay sitting or standing for 30 minutes after taking them to avoid a stomach upset.
- Avoid dairy, antacids or vitamins with calcium, magnesium or iron for **two hours before** taking the pills and for **two hours after** – they can stop the medicine from working properly.

## Are there any side effects?

Most people do not have any problems, but around 1 in 10 may:

- feel sick
- get headaches
- have stomach pain or acid reflux.

Doxycycline can make your skin more sensitive to the sun, so use sun cream when you are outside.

To help avoid side effects:

- take the medication with food and water
- stay upright for 30 minutes afterwards.

## What about resistance to antibiotics?

Some people worry that taking DoxyPEP might make bacteria harder to treat in the future. This is called antimicrobial resistance.

So far, there is no strong proof that this will be a big problem with DoxyPEP. Scientists are keeping a close eye on it to stay safe.

## Where can I get DoxyPEP?

Talk to your local sexual health clinic. They can give you advice and let you know if it is right for you.

You can also check out Queer Health's online DoxyPEP Guide for more easy-to-understand information: [www.queerhealth.info/projects/doxypep](http://www.queerhealth.info/projects/doxypep)

## MyChart

Our MyChart app and website lets you securely access parts of your health record with us, giving you more control over your care. To sign up or for help, call us on 020 3299 4618 or email [kings.mychart@nhs.net](mailto:kings.mychart@nhs.net). Visit [www.kch.nhs.uk/mychart](http://www.kch.nhs.uk/mychart) to find out more.

## Sharing your information

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has partnered with Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust through the King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas' hospitals. King's College Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trusts share an electronic patient record system, which means information about your health record can be accessed safely and securely by health and care staff at both Trusts. For more information visit [www.kch.nhs.uk](http://www.kch.nhs.uk).

## Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

## PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

Tel: **020 3299 4618**

Email: [kings.pals@nhs.net](mailto:kings.pals@nhs.net)

**If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Interpreting and Accessible Communication Support on 020 3299 4618 or email [kings.access@nhs.net](mailto:kings.access@nhs.net)**



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**[www.kch.nhs.uk](http://www.kch.nhs.uk)**

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