



# Doxy-PEP prescribing guide for San Francisco providers

## What is doxy-PEP?

Doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis (doxy-PEP) consists of using **doxycycline 200 mg within 72 hours after oral, anal, or vaginal/front-hole sex to prevent the acquisition of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis.**

Clinical trials have shown doxy-PEP to be effective among men who have sex with men (MSM) and trans women, with reductions in chlamydia and syphilis ranging from 74–88%.<sup>1,2</sup> Efficacy against gonorrhea is lower. Doxy-PEP does not prevent HIV, mpox (monkeypox), or other viral infections.

## Who can take doxy-PEP?

**Recommend doxy-PEP to cis men, trans women, and other gender-diverse people who were assigned male sex at birth, who in the past year:**

- had condomless anal or oral sex with  $\geq 1$  partner who was assigned male sex at birth, and
- had a bacterial STI.

**Offer doxy-PEP using shared decision-making to cis men, trans women, trans men, and other gender-diverse patients (of any sex assigned at birth) who in the past year:**

- did not have an STI but had condomless anal or oral sex with  $\geq 2$  partners assigned male sex at birth, regardless of STI history.

**More data is needed on the efficacy of doxy-PEP for vaginal/front-hole protection.**

- The only study to date among cis women did not find doxy-PEP effective at preventing STIs, possibly due to adherence.<sup>3</sup>

When prescribing doxy-PEP to patients who have receptive vaginal/front-hole sex, providers should counsel patients about the lack of efficacy data, recommend against doxy-PEP use during pregnancy, and reinforce the importance of adherence.

## Dosing and prescribing guidance

- **200 mg of doxycycline taken as soon as possible** after condomless oral or anal sex, but **no later than 72 hours afterward.**
- **Doxycycline can be taken every day** depending on frequency of sexual activity, but **no more than 200 mg within a 24-hour period.**
- **Acceptable formulations:**
  - Doxycycline hyclate or monohydrate **immediate release 100 mg** (2 tabs taken together)
  - Doxycycline hyclate **delayed release 200 mg** (1 tab), but typically much costlier
- **Example Rx:** doxycycline 100 mg, #60, 1 refill, take 2 capsules (200 mg) by mouth as needed ASAP after condomless sex, and no later than 72 hours after. Do not take more than 200 mg in a 24-hour period.
- **ICD-10 diagnosis code Z20.2** (Contact with and (suspected) exposure to infections with a predominantly sexual mode of transmission).





### How should I monitor patients taking doxy-PEP?

- **Every 3 months**, screen for gonorrhea and chlamydia at all anatomic sites of exposure, syphilis, and HIV (if not known to be living with HIV).
- **If a patient is diagnosed with an STI or reports symptoms of an STI while using doxy-PEP**, they should be evaluated and treated according to standard CDC STI treatment guidelines ([www.bit.ly/STI\\_guides](http://www.bit.ly/STI_guides)).
- **If a patient using doxy-PEP reports:**
  - **exposure to a sexual partner with syphilis:** epi-treat for syphilis per standard of care.
  - **exposure to a sexual partner with gonorrhea or chlamydia:** consider waiting on epi-treatment until test results are back using shared decision-making with patient.



### How should I counsel patients taking doxy-PEP?

- **Doxy-PEP is highly effective for the prevention of syphilis and chlamydia.** It may prevent gonorrhea, but not as well.
- **Take doxycycline with fluids and remain upright for 30 minutes** after the dose to reduce pill esophagitis. Taking doxycycline with food may increase tolerability.
- **Protect against sun sensitivity.** Patients should be counseled to wear sunscreen and/or avoid prolonged sun exposure while taking doxycycline.
- **Avoid doxycycline during pregnancy.** Patients who could get pregnant should receive pregnancy testing and be counseled to stop doxycycline if they become pregnant.
- There is a rare risk of benign intracranial hypertension and other serious side effects.
- Risks of doxy-PEP related to the microbiome and antibiotic resistance are being studied.
- Find detailed information in our patient-facing counseling handout and dosing instructions.



### Offer comprehensive sexual health services

- **Offer HIV PrEP to all sexually active people** if they are not already taking it. Options include daily PrEP, 2-1-1 PrEP, and injectable PrEP.
- **Ensure people living with HIV are in care** and inform patients that maintaining an undetectable HIV viral load eliminates the risk of transmitting HIV to sexual partners.
- **Every 3 months**, screen for gonorrhea and chlamydia (using urine, pharyngeal, and rectal NAAT testing) and syphilis, regardless of HIV serostatus.
- **Vaccinations should be offered for eligible individuals.** These could include mpox (Jynneos), meningococcal (MenACWY), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and HPV.

**For detailed guidance, visit our website ([sfcityclinic.org](http://sfcityclinic.org)): [tinyurl.com/doxypepupdate](https://tinyurl.com/doxypepupdate) or contact Alyson Decker: [alyson.decker@sfdph.org](mailto:alyson.decker@sfdph.org)**

(1) Luetkemeyer AF, et al. Postexposure Doxycycline to Prevent Bacterial Sexually Transmitted Infections. *N Engl J Med.* 2023; 388:1296-1306.  
(2) Molina, J, et al. Doxycycline Prophylaxis and Meningococcal Group B Vaccine to Prevent Bacterial Sexually Transmitted Infections in France (ANRS 174 DOXYVAC): A Multicentre, Open-label, Randomised Trial with a 2 × 2 Factorial Design. *The Lancet Infectious Diseases.* Published online May 23, 2024. (3) Stewart J, et al. Doxycycline Prophylaxis to Prevent Sexually Transmitted Infections in Women. *N Engl J Med.* 2023; 389(25):2331-2340.