

FACT SHEET

RADIO PRODUCTION GUIDE

MY SEXUAL HEALTH, MY RESPONSIBILITY AND PREP

SOUTH AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

Defining concepts

- Sexual health** refers to the care and condition of your body when it comes to sexual activity and engagement. Just like any other form of health such as the dentist or a special knee doctor, your sexual health should be tended to regularly, to best keep your body, and other bodies, healthy. What is great about sexual health is that the choice is yours; you get to make the choices that are best for your own body. The [World Health Organization](#) defines sexual health as “a state of physical, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality. It requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence”.
- Antiretroviral therapy (ART)** is the medication used to treat HIV. The treatment is effective because it is made of a combination of antiretrovirals (ARVs). ARVs slows the rate at which HIV makes copies of itself in the body and can keep viral loads low. ARVs allow the body’s immune system to fight infections.
- PrEP (Pre Exposure Prophylaxis)** is a tablet form ARV taken by HIV-negative people who are at high risk of contracting HIV. It must be taken daily for it to reduce the chance of infection. PrEP needs to be taken during the time an HIV-negative person is at high risk, and does not need to be for life.
- Contraceptive** is a device or drug serving to prevent pregnancy. Contraceptive forms are more specific in that they are used for the purpose of preventing sperm from reaching a female’s egg. All types of contraception are forms of **birth control**.
- These methods, like the “morning after pill,” are often known as emergency contraception.
- Serodiscordant couples** are intimate partners, regardless of gender, such that one is living with HIV and the other is HIV-negative ([Spotlight SA](#)).
- Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)** is an infection that can be caught or passed on when you have unprotected sex, or close sexual contact, with another person who already has an STI. Using a condom for all types of sex is the best way to avoid STIs and HIV ([Avert](#)).
- Stigma** is negative feelings, opinions, attitudes and beliefs that lead people to reject, avoid or fear people they perceive as different ([DCR](#)).
- A **holistic approach** to sexual and reproductive health refers to considering the many factors that make this up. Sexual and reproductive healthcare goes beyond a clinic or getting tested where things like consent, agency, safety, and power dynamics can all be considered as a part of one’s health.
- Men who have Sex with Men (MSM)** refers to men who engage in sexual activities with other men; a behavioural term which does not reference one’s identity or desires necessarily, there are many situations where men engage in sex with men without identifying as gay or bisexual ([Gender Dynamix](#)).
- Consent** is permission or agreement ([Cambridge](#)).
- Disclosure** in the context of sexual health, refers to revealing the status of your health to the people it would be relevant to,

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such as telling a sexual partner that you recently tested for HIV and you are positive (AIDS Foundation South Africa).

- **Gender Identity** is one's sense and expression of gender. Society recognizes two genders, male and female, but there are various other gender identities as well as people who reject gender all together (Gender Dynamix).
- **Trans-gender** typically refers to anyone whose gender identity does not align with their assigned sex and gender at birth. Some trans people are binary-identified and others are not (Irantí).

SEXUALITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

A holistic approach to sexual health goes beyond a visit to a sexual health clinic and what we think of as just getting tested or using contraceptives. Rather, we can think about the many things that go into taking responsibility and making healthy decisions for oneself. One of the most important factors of your sexual health is understanding consent. When having sex with another person or persons, it is important to know your limits and to consciously and enthusiastically say “yes” to sexual contact when you want it and say “no” when you don't. This also means respecting and listening to others when they say “yes” or “no”. Part of making healthy decisions is trusting and using your voice. When you can understand consent, you can make decisions that make you comfortable and safe as well as the people you have sex with.

The barriers to making these decisions can come down to awareness and discrimination. Often times, information about sexual and reproductive health for youth can be limited to their schools' particular curriculum. This can mean that the only information a young person may receive could be limited to information that promotes abstinence only. Therefore, young people won't have access to information about protection and contraceptives if they are indeed sexually active. In addition, marginalized groups

like the LGBTQ + community and people with disabilities are often discounted or discriminated against when it comes to sexual and reproductive health. For LGBTQ+ youth, information about sex in a homosexual context may not be available in a school and some peers and teachers may also be intolerant and hostile towards such relationships. This not only leaves LGBTQ+ youth without information, but can shame their identity, making it difficult to make healthy and informed decisions. Often times, sexual and reproductive health information doesn't account for people with disabilities both in the delivery of the material and in the content itself. When information is printed out or made available online, there is often a lack of materials in braille, large print, simple language, and pictures, or a lack of sign language interpreters. Also, people with disabilities are often not thought of as sexually active or in full relationships, therefore information about sexual and reproductive health can be very limited or not there at all, also furthering the stigmatization and marginalization of people with disabilities. However, the health department is currently working to expand information and access to SRH by incorporating youth friendly health services in clinics and schools to improve awareness and outcome.

Another part of your sexual health is agency

and communication. When making choices about your sexual health, it is important to be honest with yourself and others. While you may not have everything figured out, talking about contraceptives, protections, likes and dislikes, and testing with your partners can allow you to know and share your status and body with others.

Lastly, using contraceptives, prevention from HIV/AIDS, pregnancy and STIs, and taking responsibility for your sexual and reproductive health are key parts of making positive choices about one's sexual health. For example, oftentimes in heterosexual and cis-gendered sexual relationships, the responsibility to be on contraception like birth control falls on the woman or broadly, the person with a vagina. This perpetuates the role women and people with vaginas must play in taking up a lot of responsibility and to deal with the physical burden of side effects

of birth control. While it is important to have responsibility for yourself, it is also important to not allow the sole responsibility to fall on one person or the other (s).

Antiretrovirals (ARVs) is the medication used to treat HIV as it lowers the rate at which HIV makes copies of itself in the body and can keep viral loads low. There are a number of ways one can take responsibility to make positive and healthy decisions for themselves including choosing to prevent HIV. Choosing to access and take PrEP is one way one can take responsibility for yours and others health. PrEP is a medication that lowers your risk of HIV by over 90% when taken regularly and can be a good choice for many people in maintaining your sexual health and overall well being. By lowering your risk of HIV, you can manage your own health and the health of your partner(s) and prevent the contraction and spread of the HIV virus.

SRHS AND MINORITY GROUPS

PrEP

Key Concepts

What is PrEP?

- PrEP stands for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis and is an oral medication, usually a small blue pill, that people can take daily to prevent the transmission of HIV. According to the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#), taking PrEP regularly can reduce the risk of HIV infection from unprotected sex by over 90%, and from needle transfer or injecting drug by at least 74%. This means PrEP is highly effective at preventing HIV when taken consistently.

Who is PrEP for?

- PrEP is simply for anyone who is HIV negative and wants to prevent the infection, or become **HIV positive**. It is often taken by those who are at risk of contracting HIV, which could be someone

who has an HIV positive partner or a person who engages in sex with multiple partners or someone who has condomless sex.

Why is PrEP often marketed towards young women, sex workers and the LGBTQ+ community, specifically cis-gender gay and bisexual men and transgender women?

- PrEP is often **marketed towards** men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender women and this is because of the potential regularity of anal intercourse. For example, cis gay and bi-sexual men generally have a **higher risk of HIV** due to the increased practice of anal or rectal sex, which has a **greater possibility** of transmission than vaginal intercourse. Transgender women who have regular anal sex share this same higher risk in regards to transmission. PrEP is also marketed towards sex workers as their work can incur in having multiple sexual partners increasing the potential

of sexual contact with someone who is HIV positive. Young women have been identified as being at risk of HIV due to condomless sex as well as the threat and reality of rape and gender and sexually based violence. Lastly, research shows that people who inject drugs are 24 times more likely to acquire HIV than adults in the general population, sex workers are 10 times more likely to acquire HIV, men who have sex with men are 24 times more likely, and transgender women are 49 times more likely to be living with HIV than other adult females. However, HIV and its sexual transmission is not limited to these groups of people. This means anyone of any gender identity, sexual orientation, or occupation could consider PrEP as part of their sexual health choices.

What are the benefits of PrEP ?

- PrEP greatly reduces the risk of HIV when taken regularly and this benefits those at risk of contracting it and those who want to protect themselves
- It is an oral medication and could be taken discreetly. This means for people who are in unhealthy or unsafe relationships where they are not empowered to express their desires and needs, unsafe situations or relationships where consent and protection are not there, PrEP can at least prevent HIV when taken regularly (Avert).

What PrEP doesn't do?

- When you go back to what PrEP stands for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, meaning it is a medication that helps lower your risk of HIV before exposure, or pre-exposure. In this case, PrEP does not cure HIV nor is it a medication that can treat HIV positive people. There is currently no cure for HIV.
- PrEP also does not prevent STI's or pregnancy, its sole function is the prevention of HIV

How is PrEP part of a holistic approach to sexual health?

- PrEP as an HIV prevention medication can be part of your sexual and

reproductive health for many reasons. PrEP can greatly reduce your risk of HIV and is a good choice if you are at risk. PrEP can also be a part of your sexual and reproductive health because it can start conversations about the importance of taking responsibility for your sexual health and can spread awareness of medication and its benefits. Talking about the options available for your sexual health can also help to break the stigma around sexual health, STIs, and PrEP.

PrEP and Stigma

- Taking PrEP can be associated with homosexuality, sex work, and drug use, all of which are looked down upon by society in addition to sex work and drug usage being criminalised. HIV and being HIV positive itself is also highly stigmatised where many people do not want to disclose their status for many reasons including fear of rejection, shame, and in some cases discrimination. Therefore, some people can feel discouraged to take PrEP regularly or take it at all. Not only does this prevent people from taking what can be life saving medication, but it silences the conversation about sexual health. This can also make people who don't belong to the targeted groups of sex workers, LGBT people, or young women feel more safe or at a lesser risk of HIV, which isn't *always the case*.

Other reasons why young people may not use PrEP :

- Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare can be hard to talk about: Conversation and honesty are key parts of holistic decision making and one's sexual and reproductive health. The silence around PrEP and prevention generally not only maintains stigma and shame, but it can prevent people from making decisions that can have huge benefits.
- Low awareness: If there isn't a lot of access to information about PrEP, this can put youth in a tough position to learn and educate others

- Dislike of medication: youth may not like regularly taking or needing to have medicine.
- Not seeing the benefit: The long-term benefits of PrEP can be difficult to grasp over short-term hassle.
- Socioeconomic barriers: Lacking access to well resourced clinics or information sources about PrEP generally
- Side effects: Some people may not take or access PrEP because of the side effects of the medication such as nausea (Laura Myers, Behavioural Scientist Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation)

KEY FACTS- PREP IN SOUTH AFRICA

Where can you get PrEP in South Africa?

- PrEP is not yet widely available in South Africa. In fact , **only 350,000** people have ever taken the medication and a large majority of those people are in the United States. PrEP has been offered for **free** by certain clinics and research projects in South Africa that do outreach with young women, gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, and sex workers. PrEP can be accessed through the private sector in certain parts of the country, with prescriptions ranging from R200-R500 with medical aid sometimes covering the cost as well.
- In 2015, The U.S. and South African governments (partnering with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Girl Effect) launched a program called DREAMS The goal of DREAMS is to help girls develop into Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe (DREAMS) women. This program delivers funds to various groups in the country to provide HIV prevention and treatments to South Africa and nine other African countries.
- In 2016, South Africa had 270 000 new HIV infections and 110 000 AIDS-related deaths. There were 7 100 000 people living with HIV in 2016. Just over half of them were accessing antiretroviral therapy. Among people living with HIV, approximately 45% had suppressed viral loads.
- South Africa has set targets for progress in dealing with HIV. Between 2017 and 2022 each province must implement strategic plans to reach these targets.

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING PREP

- **Availability:** PrEP isn't widely available in South Africa through low cost or free channels. The latest estimates note that about 34,000 to 35,000 people are on PrEP in **South Africa**. It's been made accessible largely **through research projects** rather than national or local healthcare.
- **Stigma:** Many people may not access PrEP if they feel shame around being identified as belonging to one of the high risk groups more susceptible to HIV than the broader population. For example, the LGBTQ+ community still faces **widespread discrimination** and violence which can make it hard to access health care and health care practioners.
- **Criminalisation of sex work:** Sex work in South Africa is criminalised and this can make it difficult for sex workers to access regular and inclusive care as it may put them and their work at **risk**
- **Lack of holistic care:** Often times healthcare clinics function as a drop in or serve patients on an urgent care basis. This can make regular counseling and refill

of the medicine limited. Healthcare clinic spaces can also be unfriendly to youth seeking information about sexual and reproductive health.

- **Side effects:** The [Center for Disease Control](#) notes that PrEP has been known to cause nausea in some people who take the medication.

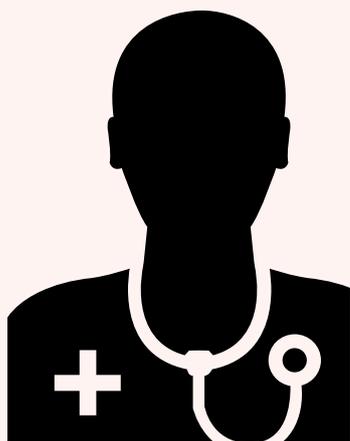
- **Power dynamics in relationships:** Some people may not be able to access PrEP because they cannot talk to their partners safely or their situation doesn't allow for consistent access and refilling of the medication.

FUTURE OF PREP

- It looks as if it will take time for PrEP to be made widely accessible, especially outside of research projects. Asking for PrEP at your local clinic could increase its demand and visibility. Talking and working with sexual and reproductive health, LGBTQ+ health, sex worker health, young women's health organizations could also allow for lobbying and collective [to increase PrEP's availability](#).
- Advocating for more nurse led or even a demedicalised approach could make PrEP more widely available, meaning one could ask for the medication more easily than needing to go through a formalised prescription route ([Avert](#)).
- When thinking about the distribution of PrEP, creating structures or encouraging clinics and distributors to welcome patients and prioritize their needs, use language of tolerability rather than side effects, ensure confidentiality and privacy, and have convenient methods of distribution that are accessible

DID YOU KNOW

In December 2015, South Africa became the first African country to issue full regulatory approval of PrEP and to include PrEP in its national HIV programme.



PrEP was first made available in South Africa in [2016](#) when the National Department of Health made the medication free and available to sex workers



MYTH BUSTER**MYTH****FACT**

PrEP prevents HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases

PrEP only prevents HIV and only when taken consistently. PrEP does not prevent any other sexually transmitted infections (Avert)

HIV can be passed on through kissing or toilet seats in addition to sexual contact

HIV is passed on through four main avenues: unprotected vaginal or anal sex, sharing of unsterilised needles, mother to child transfer, or blood transfusion (the risk here is low as nearly all facilities check for HIV infected blood prior to transfusion) (Avert)

PrEP works immediately to prevent me from HIV

PrEP usually needs to be in your body for about seven days before it becomes effective, protecting you from HIV following unprotected sex (Avert)

PrEP is only for gay men, sex workers, and young women

PrEP is for anyone who is at risk of contracting HIV and wants to prevent it (Avert)

I can take PrEP after exposure to HIV via sexual contact or blood exposure

PrEP is a preventative medication that is effective with consistent dosage. This differs from PEP which stands for Post-exposure prophylaxis, and, is an emergency treatment for HIV. It's a short course of antiretroviral drugs that can stop HIV infection if taken properly (Avert)

Being HIV positive will limit my life

Many people can live full lives while being HIV positive. It is important to break the shame and silence around living with HIV. The more we can talk about the status of our bodies and the health, the greater possibility families, friends, and communities can support each other and learn about and access the health care needed to live a healthy HIV positive life.



PREPARING FOR THE SHOW

ANGLES

HOW TO TALK ABOUT HOLISTIC APPROACHES TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND USING PREP:

- What is the role of advocacy in increasing PrEP access in South Africa?
- What is the role of stigma in sexual health and how do we address it?
- What does it mean to make informed decisions about your sexual health?
- Why is it important to take responsibility for your sexual health? How can young people do this?

CHOOSE AN ANGLE

Why is it important to take responsibility for your sexual health? How can young people do this?

WAYS TO TALK ABOUT: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR SEXUAL HEALTH? HOW CAN YOUNG PEOPLE DO THIS?

FORMATS



VOX POP



Vox pop aim

To get many opinions on one topic.



Who do you talk to?

Anybody in the community.



Question

What do you do to take care of your sexual health? Do you know the options available to you such as prevention methods like using condoms or taking PrEP?



AUDIO COMMENTARY



Audio commentary aim

To get people's opinion about a topic that they care deeply about.



Questions

Why is it important young people know the options available to them in regards to sexual health, especially in the prevention of HIV?



AUDIO PROFILE



Audio profile aim

To get a first person account of someone's experience, passion or journey. Audio profiles often aim to inspire.



Who do you talk to?

A young person who takes or has taken PrEP

Questions to ask to get the person thinking before they record their profile

- Where did you hear about PrEP?
- Why is it important for you to take this medication?
- What could be better about PrEP in terms of access or dosage or public information?
- Why is your sexual health important to you?
- How is communication, consent, and disclosure part of your decision making process?

OR

- Who do you talk to: A health care practitioner at your local clinic who knows about PrEP or someone at an HIV NGO or LGBTQ+ advocacy group that knows about PrEP.
- Questions to ask to get the person thinking before they record their profile
- What is your background, how long have you been doing this work?
- Why is PrEP important?
- How can young people have conversations about sexual health and holistic approaches to making responsible decisions?
- What should young people consider when making decisions about sexual health?



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT



The aim of a PSA

To create a public awareness message.



HOW TO PRESENT YOUR SHOW

Use your produced radio features, your research and the suggested script and questions to write your own script.

[INTRO:]

Host 1: It's just gone [TIME] and you're just in time for the [NAME OF SHOW] on [RADIO STATION]. My name is [NAME].

Host 2: And my name is [NAME], and today's show is all about the holistic approaches to sexual and reproductive health. What does that even mean? Well, it means we are going to talk about all the different things that go into making decisions that are best for your sexual and reproductive health.

Host 1: Your sexual and reproductive health is made up of lots of things besides just protection or safety; it is about using your voice, understanding consent, being informed, and importantly, choosing healthy, communicating and making space for that communication. It's about everybody getting what they need to live a healthy life!

Host 2: It makes total sense! When we are able to talk about sexual and reproductive health, we can talk to each other about sometimes uncomfortable and taboo topics like STIs and HIV. One part of a holistic approach to sexual health is considering the options available to you that work best for your body and the choices you make. PrEP can be one of those things! What is PrEP? PrEP is a medication that people can take that reduces your risk of HIV by over 90% when you take it everyday! This is a big development and can really decrease the spread of HIV. This could be a good option for people who have HIV positive partners, people who have regular anal sex as HIV has a higher rate of transfer through the rectum tissue, such as gay or bi-sexual cisgender-men, or people who have unprotected sex. So today, we'll be exploring how PrEP can be part of a holistic approach to sexual health.

Host 1: So first, let's hear from a clinic manager who works in sexual and reproductive health facility and knows all about PrEP
[PRESENT WHO IS BEING INTERVIEWED]
[PLAY THE INTERVIEW]

Suggested questions for your interview with someone who knows about the reality
How can young people have conversations about sexual health and holistic approaches to making responsible decisions?
What is the role of communication and consent when making decisions about sexual health?
What is your background, how long have you been doing healthcare work?
What is PrEP?
Why is PrEP important? Why should young people use it?
What is the role of stigma in accessing or even knowing about PrEP

[OUTRO:]

Host 1: Today, we've heard about different ways one can take the responsibility to make decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. We also learn how PrEP can be a part of that holistic approach for a lot of people. Including you and me.

Host 2: Yes, and it's exciting to know that PrEP exists. It makes sense that communication and consent not only help us make decisions about our sexual and reproductive health but also help break down stigma.

Host 1: Next week on [DAY] at [TIME] we'll be talking all about [NEXT WEEK'S SHOW TOPIC]. Until then, it's bye from us!