



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

PrEP: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

For journalists, partners, and public communication

Kenya's **HIV prevention** programme offers a range of HIV prevention options that allow people to choose the method that best fits their lives, preferences, and needs. When HIV prevention methods are used correctly, they provide very strong protection against acquiring HIV.

What is Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)?

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) refers to antiretroviral drugs taken by HIV negative people who are at ongoing risk of HIV infection to reduce their chances of becoming infected.

What are the available PrEP options in the country?

The PrEP options available includes oral PrEP, Cabotegravir (CAB-LA) and Lenacapavir (LEN).

What is PrEP Choice?

PrEP choice means that a person has the right, clear information, and freedom without pressure from anyone to choose the HIV prevention method that works best for them at that time.

How does PrEP work?

PrEP medicines work by blocking the virus from making copies of itself. Therefore, if HIV cannot multiply, it cannot take hold and cause infection.

[Consistent use is key to achieving and maintaining protection.](#)

Who can use PrEP (oral PrEP CAB-LA, or LEN)?

PrEP is recommended for any HIV-negative person who wants to protect themselves from HIV.

What is oral PrEP?

Oral PrEP is a HIV prevention pill for people who are HIV-negative.

[Oral PrEP has been used safely and effectively in Kenya and globally for many years and remains a cornerstone of HIV prevention.](#)

How is oral PrEP taken?

Oral PrEP is taken as a pill by mouth. It is taken one pill every day, at about the same time each day. This keeps enough medicine in the body to protect against HIV.

[It is flexible – people can start and stop oral PrEP depending on their needs and life circumstances, in consultation with a healthcare provider. It does not need to be taken for life.](#)

What is Cabotegravir (CAB-LA) for PrEP?

Cabotegravir (CAB) is a long acting is an injection administered on the buttock muscle by a health care provider. When starting cabotegravir, a person is given one injection, then repeated after one month then thereafter every two months

What is Lenacapavir (LEN)?

Lenacapavir is a long-acting HIV prevention medicine used as PrEP.

Oral PrEP | CAB-LA | LEN PrEP

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How is Lenacapavir administered?

Lenacapavir is administered by a trained healthcare provider as two subcutaneous (under the skin) injections usually in the abdomen or thigh. On the same day as the injections, the person takes two tablets by mouth, and then two more tablets 24 hours later.

After this starting dose, lenacapavir is given once every six months.

How soon do oral PrEP, CAB-LA and LEN start to provide protection?

- Oral PrEP: It takes up to 7 days of continuous use to achieve protective levels of the medicine
- CAB-LA: After your first injection, it takes about 7 days for the medicine to build up enough levels in your body to protect you from HIV.
- LEN: Protection builds within 2 days after the loading doses are completed. However, if the person does not use the oral Lenacapavir tablets, it takes up to 1 month to achieve protective levels

What do clients need to do before starting PrEP?

Before starting any PrEP option, clients will:

- Test HIV-negative
- Be screened for general health and readiness
- Receive counselling on PrEP Choice

This ensures informed decision-making and safe use.

What side effects can be expected?

Most people experience no or mild side effects that resolve within two weeks

- Oral PrEP: Some people may experience short-term headache, nausea, or tiredness when starting.
- CAB-LA: Cause mild pain or swelling where the injection was given, and sometimes headache or fever, but most side effects are minor and go away on their own.
- Lenacapavir: Some people experience temporary injection-site reactions such as redness, swelling, or a small lump under the skin.

Healthcare providers will support clients if side effects occur.

Does PrEP protect against pregnancy or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?

No, PrEP does not prevent STIs and it also does not prevent pregnancy. PrEP should therefore be used together with a condom. For females who are on PrEP and do not want to conceive, they should use a contraceptive method.

Can people switch between PrEP options?

Yes. People can switch between oral PrEP and long-acting options like CAB-LA and LEN in consultation with a healthcare provider who guide transitions to ensure continuous protection.

What happens if someone stops using PrEP?

- Oral PrEP: Protection decreases quickly once pills are stopped.
- CABLA: HIV risk returns as early as 2–3 months after the missed injection if no other prevention method is used.
- Lenacapavir: Protection lasts 6 months after the last injection.

People who stop PrEP and continue to have HIV exposure should use other prevention methods or speak to a healthcare provider about restarting or switching options.

Where can PrEP be accessed?

- Oral PrEP: Widely available at health facility, mobile clinics, private pharmacies and youth- and key-population-friendly services.
- CAB-LA and LEN: Available at selected public health facilities during the phased rollout, with expansion planned as systems and training grow.

Why is expanding PrEP Choice important?

People's lives, bodies, and circumstances differ.

Offering multiple HIV prevention options supports:

- Higher uptake
- Better continuation
- Greater equity in access
- Stronger population-level HIV prevention impact
- Choice allows people to protect themselves in ways that fit their real lives.

Can PrEP be used during pregnancy and breastfeeding?

Yes. Both oral PrEP and Lenacapavir are safe and can be used during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

During pregnancy and breastfeeding period, a woman has a higher chance of getting HIV. Using PrEP during this time helps protect the mother from HIV and when the mother is protected, the baby is protected too.

Healthcare providers support informed decision-making.

For more information, visit your nearest health facility or ULIZA NASCOP: **0726460000**