

Health
HIV

Starting the Conversation: A Navigator's Guide to Discussing Rapid-Start PrEP



WHEN TO START THE CONVERSATION

Delays in starting PrEP can lead to patients falling through the cracks, so knowing when to begin a rapid-start PrEP conversation is just as important as knowing what to say. As a PrEP Navigator, your role is to recognize the moments when rapid-start PrEP may be indicated and open the door to a supportive conversation. Acting on opportunities to discuss rapid-start PrEP can help patients access protection when they need it most.

Start a conversation about rapid-start PrEP when the patient:

- ☐ Mentions possible exposure to HIV
- ☐ Asks about “something stronger” than condoms
- ☐ Mentions using condoms irregularly or not at all
- ☐ Comes in for STI testing or treatment
- ☐ Has a partner with HIV
- ☐ Is sexually active and not currently on PrEP
- ☐ Expresses worry about HIV or any STI
- ☐ Is starting gender-affirming care or other sexual health services
- ☐ Is thinking about or trying to get pregnant
- ☐ Brings up general health and well-being
- ☐ Asks about PrEP

In reality, every conversation is a chance to connect patients with fast, effective HIV prevention. Your guidance can make rapid-start PrEP feel easy, accessible, and within reach today.

RAPID-START PrEP CONVERSATION STARTERS

Starting the conversation doesn't have to be complicated: patients often just need to know that rapid-start options are available. These quick conversation openers help you introduce rapid-start PrEP in a way that feels natural, supportive, and easy to understand. Use them anytime you see an opportunity, even if you only have a minute.

Conversation Starter 1: Open & Natural

"Would you like to hear about a medication you can start today that reduces the likelihood of getting HIV by over 99%?"

Conversation Starter 2: Normalize & Empower

"Many patients who come in for STI testing choose to start PrEP the same day. Want to see if rapid-start PrEP is a good fit for you?"

Conversation Starter 3: Highlight Rapid-Start

"If you're interested, we may be able to get you started on PrEP today. Would you be interested in that?"

Conversation Starter 4: Reduce Barriers & Build Support

"People are often surprised by how simple it can be to start PrEP today. We can help you figure out the costs and walk you through the process."

Conversation Starter 5: Helping the Unsure

"We've helped many people with rapid-start PrEP. You don't have to decide right now. Would you like to know about the rapid-start PrEP so you can think about it?"

KEY POINTS TO COMMUNICATE

Once a patient shows interest, a few clear facts about rapid-start PrEP can help them feel more confident in their choice to start it today. Keep the message simple, straightforward, and focused on what matters most: safety, effectiveness, and how easy rapid-start PrEP can be.



PrEP is Highly Effective

PrEP reduces the likelihood of getting HIV by over 99% when taken as prescribed.



Rapid-Start Means Starting Today

Rapid-start allows patients to begin medication after a quick HIV test and provider assessment. No waiting weeks for lab test results.



PrEP Can Be Affordable

Most patients can get PrEP at little or no cost with insurance, copay programs, or financial assistance. We can help if you need support with that.



Safe to Start Before Labs Return

If the rapid HIV test is negative and there are no signs of acute HIV infection, it's safe to start PrEP while waiting for the rest of the lab results.



Support Continues after Today

As your PrEP navigator, I'll help you with follow-up visits, refills, questions, and anything else you need to stay on PrEP and feel confidence throughout your prevention journey.

When you offer simple explanations and same-day options, you help patients access protection exactly when they need it. Your guidance makes starting PrEP feel easy, supportive, and achievable for every patient.

COMMON QUESTIONS & QUICK ANSWERS

Patients often have questions or concerns when they first hear about rapid-start PrEP. Being ready with clear, concise answers helps them feel safe, informed, and confident about starting. Use these quick responses to address common concerns and keep the conversation straightforward and supportive.

Is it safe to start PrEP today?



Yes. If the rapid HIV test is negative and there are no signs of acute HIV, starting PrEP the same day is safe for most people.

Are there side effects?



Most people don't have side effects when using oral PrEP. If they do happen, they are usually mild and temporary. You can reach out to me or your provider for help managing any symptoms you develop.

Do I have to take PrEP forever?



No. You can start, pause, or stop PrEP based on your needs and lifestyle. Rapid-start PrEP gives you protection immediately while you make long-term decisions.

How quickly does PrEP start working?



PrEP begins protecting you from HIV right away. You start with a double-dose on day 1 and then continue a single dose each day afterwards. A missed dose every now and then does not reduce PrEP effectiveness. we can discuss ways to ensure you take your prep as prescribed.

Can I change to a different type of PrEP, such as a long-acting injectable?



Yes. People can switch to different forms of PrEP. Getting a quick start with oral PrEP to protect yourself is key. At your follow-up appointments, your provider and I can help you decide if changing to a different PrEP option is right for you.

BEFORE YOU FINISH THE CONVERSATION

Closing the rapid-start PrEP conversation is just as important as starting it. A clear and encouraging close can make a big difference. Supporting patients who are ready for rapid-start PrEP provides the encouragement necessary to complete the process, while offering support to patients who aren't ready for rapid-start PrEP keeps the door open for future conversations about PrEP.

If the Patient Is NOT Interested in Rapid-Start PrEP

Acknowledge their choice

"Thanks for talking this through with me. Your comfort and readiness matter."

Normalize their hesitation

"Lots of people need time to think about PrEP. There's no pressure and it's completely okay to take this at your own pace."

Keep the door open

"If anything changes, or you want to revisit PrEP later, I'm here to help whenever you're interested."

Offer a small next step

"If it helps, I can give you a quick info sheet you can look over later. You can reach out anytime if questions come up or if you'd like to revisit PrEP."

If the Patient IS Interested in Rapid-Start PrEP

Affirm the decision

"Great! Starting now can help you get protected as soon as possible."

Offer continued support

"I'm here for you throughout this process, so feel free to ask any questions along the way."

Prepare to move forward

"Let's walk through the next steps together."

Now that your patient is interested in rapid-start PrEP, start the **Rapid-Start PrEP Patient Readiness Assessment**.