**Doxycycline as STI PEP:**

**An Overview for Pharmacists and Providers**

**What is Doxycycline as STI PEP?**

Doxycycline as STI PEP is a targeted intervention for bacterial STIs that can potentially reduce STI acquisition and transmission. It involves taking 200 mg of doxycycline ideally within 24 hours but no later than 72 hours after condomless oral, anal, or vaginal sex.

**Is there clinical trial data to support the efficacy of doxycycline as STI PEP?**

An NIH-funded study [published](https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2211934) by the New England Journal of Medicine in April 2023 found that doxycycline as STI PEP reduced syphilis by 87%, chlamydia by 88%, and gonorrhea by 55% in individuals taking HIV PrEP. Moreover, doxycycline as STI PEP reduced syphilis by 77%, chlamydia by 74%, and gonorrhea by 57% in people living with HIV (PLWH). (Source: [N Engl J Med 2023; 388:1296-1306](https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2211934))

**Is doxycycline as STI PEP for everyone?**

Current efficacy data only applies to adult gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM), as well as transgender women. Studies among heterosexual cis-gender women and adolescents are ongoing.

**What are the dosing guidelines for doxycycline as STI PEP?**

* 200 mg of doxycycline should be taken ideally within 24 hours but no later than 72 hours after condomless oral, anal or vaginal sex
* Doxycycline can be taken as often as every day, depending on frequency of sexual activity, but individuals should not take more than 200 mg within a 24-hour period.
* Either doxycycline hyclate delayed release 200 mg (1 tab) OR doxycycline hyclate or monohydrate immediate release 100 mg (2 tabs taken simultaneously) are acceptable.

**What about STI testing?**

Patients using doxycycline as STI PEP should still engage in regular sexual health testing, including being screened for gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, and HIV (if not known to be living with HIV) every three months. If a person utilizing doxycycline as STI PEP is diagnosed with an STI, they should be treated according to the [2021 CDC STI treatment guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/default.htm).

**What about doxycycline’s potential side effects?**

In addition to informing patients about the potential STI prevention benefits of doxycycline as STI PEP, providers should also counsel patients about potential adverse side effects of doxycycline including phototoxicity, gastrointestinal symptoms, and more rarely esophageal ulceration.