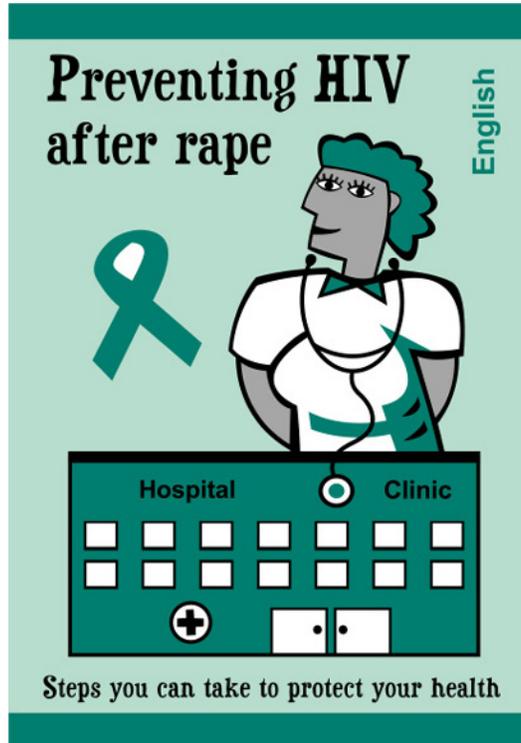


Preventing HIV after rape

Steps you can take to protect your health



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Rape can happen to anyone - woman or man, girl or boy.

If rape happens to you, remember it is not your fault.

This pamphlet tells you about steps you can take to protect your health if you have been raped.

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⌘ What are my rights?

- ✓ You have **the right** to be treated with respect and dignity at all times by doctors, nurses, police officers, prosecutors and social workers who help you after the rape.
- ✓ You have **the right** to be given full and accurate information about your health. Health workers must tell you about any medicines they can recommend to you, as well as the cost of these medicines.
- ✓ You have **the right** to emergency medical treatment if you are seriously injured even if you can't pay for it.
- ✓ Information about your health **is confidential**. No health care worker can tell others about your HIV status without your permission.
- ✓ You have **the right** to refuse treatment.

⌘ I am worried about being exposed to HIV after rape.

What can I do?

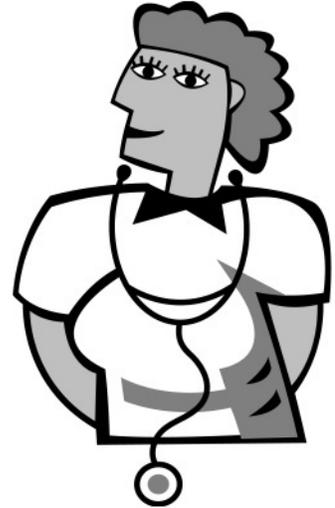
There are **anti-retroviral medicines** that you can take that may reduce the risk of becoming infected with HIV.

You can take these medicines (anti-retrovirals) if you have been raped or forced to have anal sex, if:

- ⌘ You have been told about how these medicines might stop you from being infected with HIV.
- ⌘ You have been told about the possible side effects of these medicines.
- ⌘ You have had an HIV test and have tested negative.
- ⌘ You have made your own choice to take these medicines.

⌘ How can I get these medicines?

- 1** Go to a **doctor** as soon as you can and ask about anti-retroviral medicines that could reduce the risk of getting HIV. These medicines are called “**post-exposure prophylaxis**” or **PEP**. You must start taking the medicine as soon as possible. If more than 72 hours (3 days) have passed since you were raped, it is too late for these medicines to reduce the risk of getting HIV from rape.
- 2** You should ask the doctor to give you an HIV test. Before taking an HIV test you must be **counselled** and receive information about what the test means. You should also get counselling after you receive the results of an HIV test.
- 3** While you are waiting for the results of the HIV test, the doctor may give you the medicine so that you can start taking it immediately. This is called a starter pack.
- 4** If you test HIV positive, the medicines that may reduce your risk of getting HIV from rape, will be stopped. Ask the doctor about things you can do to look after yourself when you have HIV. **Find out about:** organisations and people that can help you **live positively** and taking anti-retrovirals that will help you manage HIV.
- 5** If you only get a starter pack, go back to the doctor to get the results of your HIV test. Also get the rest of the medicines if you are HIV negative. If you think it will be impossible for you to come back to the doctor to get the rest of the medicines, remember to ask the doctor for all the medicines in the beginning.
- 6** If you test HIV negative, take the medicine for **28 days**. Remember that the starter pack of 3 days’ medicine will not protect you from HIV. **You must take the full course for all 28 days or it will not work.**
- 7** These medicines are strong and may have **side-effects** like headaches, tiredness, skin rash, a running stomach, nausea and others. These side effects are usually not serious and will not last long. If the side effects are very unpleasant, go back to the doctor.
- 8** Have another HIV test after six weeks, three months and again after six months after the rape. It is very important for you to find out the results of your HIV test so that you can know your HIV status. If you test HIV negative each time, it means that you did not contract HIV from the rape.



⌘ Where can I get these medicines?

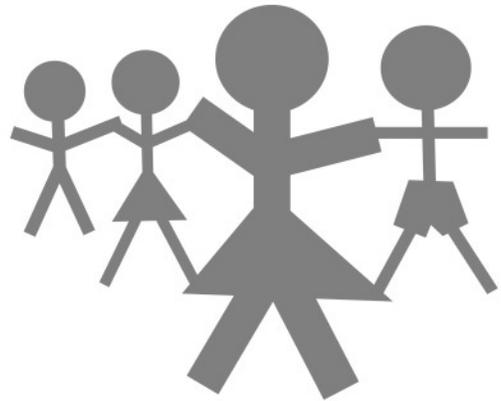
You can get these medicines at **state hospitals** and **some clinics** for free. If the hospital cannot give them to you, call the **AIDS Helpline (Tel: 0800-012-322)** and ask them where you can get these medicines. **This is a free call.**

You can also get these medicines at a **chemist**, but you will need a **prescription** and they may be expensive to buy. Many medical aid schemes now provide anti-retrovirals, so specifically ask about them.

⌘ Can children take these medicines?

Yes.

If you are over 14 you do not need your parents' or guardian's permission to have an HIV test. You also do not need their permission to take these medicines. If you are younger than 14 years, one of your parents, or your guardian or the hospital superintendent will have to give consent. But there may be emergency situations where children under 14 have been raped and need urgent assistance. In these situations, doctors should be guided by the best interests of their patients and their duty to give emergency medical treatment.



⌘ There are other steps you can take to protect your health.

Ask the doctor for:

- : Antibiotic medicines to stop you from getting a **Sexually Transmitted Infection (STIs)** from the rapist.
- : The “**morning-after**” pill to prevent you from becoming pregnant from the rape.
- : **Medicine** that would **prevent you** from getting **Hepatitis B** from the rapist.
- : If you are pregnant, find out about the possibility of HIV infection for your unborn baby from your doctor.
- : If you become pregnant from the rape, you can also discuss the termination of the pregnancy with your doctor or a health care worker.

*If you are having sex, always use a **condom**. This is **safer** for you and your partner.*

Rape is very traumatic.

It is important that you talk to someone who can listen to you and support you after rape.

A counsellor can help you cope with your feelings.

⌘ Glossary

- **AIDS**
Acquired ImmunoDeficiency Syndrome. This means the body cannot fight infections effectively because the immune system has been weakened by HIV.
- **Anti-retroviral medicines**
Medicines that are used to treat HIV. They can also be used to reduce the risk of becoming infected with HIV after rape.
- **Counsellor**
Someone who can listen to your feelings and problems and give you emotional support.
- **Hepatitis B**
A virus that damages your liver cells.
- **HIV**
Human Immunodeficiency Virus: the virus that causes AIDS.
- **Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)**
These are medicines that help you not to become infected by a certain illness or virus.
- **Rape**
If you are forced to have sexual intercourse.
- **Side-effect**
An unpleasant reaction from taking a medicine.

Phone the toll-free Stop Women Abuse Helpline

0800-150-150

They can help you get into contact with people that can help you.

AIDS Helpline:

0800-012-322

People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA):

011-642-4345/6

Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR):

011-403-5650

AIDS Law Project (ALP):

011-717-8600



**aidslaw
project**