

Doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis (DoxyPEP)

Information for patients using doxyPEP to help prevent syphilis infection.

The basics – what is doxyPEP?

- DoxyPEP is a new tool that can help stop certain sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- DoxyPEP can stop over three quarters of syphilis infection but is not 100% effective.
- DoxyPEP has been shown to reduce chlamydia infection in those taking it by about 70%
- DoxyPEP does not reduce other STIs like HIV, Hepatitis B and C, warts, pubic lice (crabs) and scabies. It is important to seek advice from your sexual health doctor or nurse if you get symptoms of an STI.
- You should still have regular STI checks if you are having sex with new partners or sex without condoms.
- Most gonorrhoea in the UK is resistant to doxycycline, so DoxyPEP is unlikely to protect you against gonorrhoea.

When and how to take doxyPEP

When to take it:

- As soon as possible and no later than 72 hours (3 days) after oral, anal/back or vaginal/front sex, if a condom isn't used for the entire time.
- You can take doxyPEP as often as every day, but don't take more than 200mg (two pills) every 24 hours.

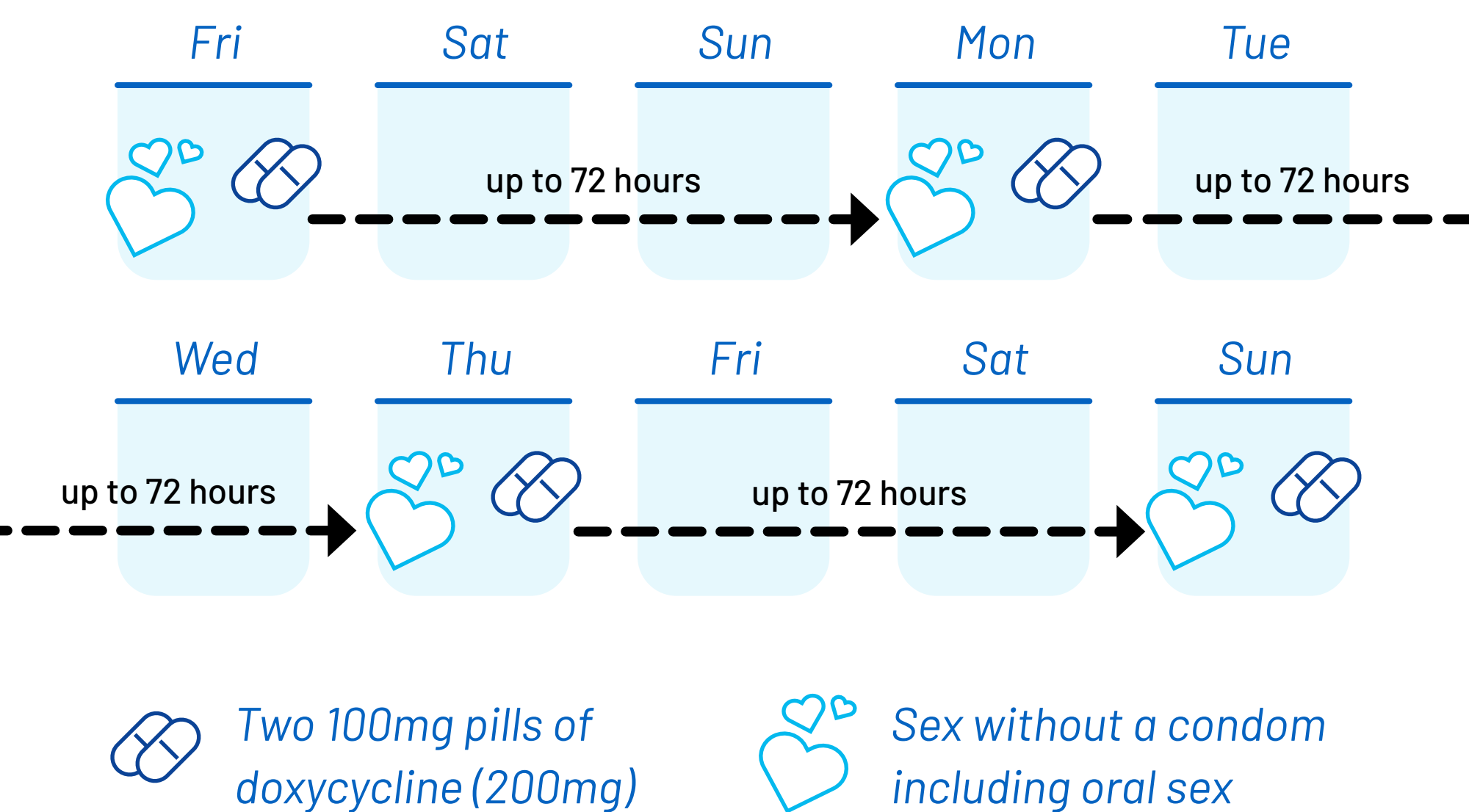
How to take it:

- Take 200mg of doxycycline (two pills) with a large glass of water. You can also take doxycycline with milk.
- Do not lie down for at least 30 minutes after taking it, so that it does not get stuck when you swallow it.
- If your stomach is upset by taking doxyPEP, taking it with food can help.
- Some people are more sensitive to the sun when they take doxycycline, so wear sunscreen with a high SPF and avoid using sunbeds.

- Heavy alcohol consumption may lower the effectiveness of doxycycline.
- Avoid antacids, or supplements containing aluminium, calcium, magnesium, zinc, iron or bismuth 2 hours before or after taking doxycycline.

How to take doxyPEP – every 72 hours (3 days)

Take two 100mg pills of doxycycline (200mg) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE after sex, and then every 72 hours (3 days) thereafter.



**DO NOT TAKE MORE THAN 200mg
IN ANY 24 HOUR PERIOD**

Risks and side effects

- Common side effects of doxyPEP include nausea, headaches and mild gut symptoms (acid reflux or upset stomach).
- Doxycycline can disrupt the balance of 'good' bacteria in the body, which might increase the chance of developing yeast infections (thrush).
- DoxyPEP is safe to use if you are living with HIV. It can be used in combination with your HIV treatment.
- DoxyPEP does not affect contraceptives, hormone replacement therapy, or PrEP.
- If you have concerns about side effects, speak to a sexual health doctor or nurse for advice.

When DoxyPEP should not be used

- If you have an allergy to doxycycline or other tetracycline antibiotics.
- Only take doxyPEP if it has been prescribed for you after appropriate consultation
- Doxycycline can interact with some other medicines if they are taken at the same time. This can cause side effects or stop medicines from working properly. For example:
 - Some other antibiotics such as rifampicin
 - Isotretinoin, a treatment for acne
 - Warfarin, a blood thinner
 - Carbamazepine and phenytoin for epilepsy
 - Ciclosporin, a medicine for the immune system

You should speak to a doctor or nurse for advice if you take any other drugs or medicines.

Pregnancy and doxyPEP

Doxycycline may not be safe throughout the whole of pregnancy or breastfeeding. Talk to your doctor, nurse or midwife before taking doxyPEP if you think you may be pregnant or if you are breastfeeding.

What we are still learning about doxyPEP

- We do not know how effective doxyPEP is for stopping STIs through vaginal or frontal sex.
- We do not know how doxyPEP might affect normal/good bacteria in our bodies or how this might affect our health.

Further information

The Love Tank “DoxyPEP – the future of STI prevention?”:
queerhealth.info/doxy pep

NHS England STI information:
nhs.uk/conditions/sexually-transmitted-infections-stis/

Acknowledgements

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For more information regarding BASHH:
www.bashh.org/guidelines

The leaflet was developed following The Information Standard principles developed by NHS England.

If you would like to comment on this leaflet, e-mail us at:
admin@bashh.org Please type ‘DoxyPEP PIL’ in the subject box.

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**British Association for
Sexual Health and HIV**