

# UR tests HIV vaccine pill

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John J. Treanor, M.D.

Researchers at the University of Rochester Medical Center are testing a new oral vaccine to prevent infection with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. The vaccine is unique because it is given as a pill, unlike most HIV vaccines tested to date that have been given as shots.

The study is funded and designed by Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC), which received support for a Collaboration for AIDS Vaccine Discovery grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The URMC team and BIDMC are collaborating with the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative, which is helping to organize the study through its Vaccine Product Development Center to provide services to BIDMC grantees. This is one of the first studies to benefit from this partnership and URMC is the only center in the world testing this [vaccine](#).

The vaccine is made of a live virus called adenovirus, a common cause of respiratory and gastroenteritis infections. The particular type of [virus](#) proposed in this study rarely causes any symptoms in adults and has been weakened to further reduce the risk of people getting sick. It contains a protein that prompts the body to make an immune response against HIV. The study vaccine is not made from actual HIV.

Researchers hope that this oral vaccine will create a more robust immune response against HIV. "We think that an oral approach may be the way to create a more effective vaccine and I'm sure that most people would rather get a vaccine in a [pill](#) rather than by yet another shot," said Michael C. Keefer, M.D., professor of Medicine and director of the University's NIH-supported HIV Vaccine Trials Unit.

John J. Treanor, M.D., professor of Medicine and chief of Infectious Diseases at UR Medicine's Strong Memorial Hospital is leading the study with support from Keefer, who has more than 20 years of experience in the preventive HIV vaccine field. They will monitor how people's immune systems respond to the vaccine and if the vaccine causes any symptoms.

The University has a long track record of conducting detailed studies of HIV vaccines, but Keefer says that this is the first time an [oral vaccine](#) has been tested in Rochester. Though the research is in its early stages, he believes the information collected from this study may help develop a vaccine that could one day become the standard of care.

Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 40, in good health and not infected with HIV. Participants will be required to spend 12 days and 11 nights at the study center and will be paid up to \$2,050 based on their level of participation. To see if you qualify for a study screening, which involves a mini-physical, health questionnaire and blood work, call 585 756-2329.

Provided by University of Rochester Medical Center

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