

Health care providers want this information before prescribing the HIV prevention, PrEP, to adolescents, study finds

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HIV infections among adolescents and young adults continue to be at high levels, with Americans between the ages of 13 and 24 accounting

for approximately 20% of all new HIV infections in 2019. However, uptake of a preventive regimen known as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in this group remains low.

Approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) since 2012, PrEP [is highly effective for preventing HIV](#) when taken as directed and reduces the risk of HIV from sex by 99% and from injection drug use by 74%.

A new [study](#) in the journal *AIDS Education and Prevention* investigated primary care providers' information needs for prescribing PrEP to adolescents. In the study, Christopher Owens, assistant professor in the Department of Health Behavior at the Texas A&M University School of Public Health, and colleagues from the Department of Health Behavior and the Texas A&M University School of Nursing used data from a national survey of health care providers to identify what information about PrEP health care providers need most to increase their willingness to prescribe it to youth.

About one-third of respondents wanted more information on dosing and [eligibility criteria](#) (34%), its effectiveness and delivery methods (28%), and side effects (28%). Providers who had never prescribed PrEP were more likely to want information on indications and dosing than those who had prescribed it before. Additionally, those respondents who reported being unaware of existing prescribing guidelines were more likely to cite this as their most important information need.

"PrEP is an effective HIV prevention strategy, and providers want information on which adolescents are eligible for PrEP, if they should prescribe the oral or injectable version, and what side effects adolescents might experience," Owens said.

"This could be provided by continuing [medical education](#) workshops or

online training, including PrEP-related information in electronic medical record systems and other clinical tools, or ensuring that medical education covers PrEP and adolescents."

More information: Christopher Owens et al, Primary Care Providers' Information Needs for Prescribing Adolescents HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, *AIDS Education and Prevention* (2023). [DOI: 10.1521/aeap.2023.35.6.484](https://doi.org/10.1521/aeap.2023.35.6.484)

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