

# Getting Started on Apretude Injectable PrEP

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## What is Apretude?

**Apretude** (also called cabotegravir) is a long-lasting injection, or shot, that helps protect against **HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)**. If you take it correctly and don't miss any doses, it can greatly reduce your risk of getting HIV. Missing doses can increase the risk of HIV infection, which might be hard to treat with other HIV medications.

Apretude is one of 3 medications available for HIV **PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)**. PrEP medications can help protect you if you do not currently have an HIV infection, but you are at risk of getting HIV through sex or injecting drugs. The other 2 PrEP medications are Truvada® and Descovy®, which are pills taken daily.

## Who can take Apretude?

Apretude is for people who are at risk of getting HIV and who do not currently have HIV (they are HIV negative).

- Risk factors for HIV infection include having unprotected sex (sex without condoms or PrEP) or sharing needles.
- Apretude should not be used by people with HIV or those who don't know their HIV status.
- Anyone taking Apretude will need to get an HIV test 4-7 days before each shot, and the test result must be negative.

## Will Apretude prevent other sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?

Apretude does not protect against other STIs like chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, or herpes. To lower your risk of HIV and other STIs, use condoms and

consider taking doxycycline (also called DoxyPEP) if you think you may have been exposed to HIV.

### **Does Apretude have any side effects?**

The most common side effect is soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site. Other less common side effects include diarrhea, headache, fever, tiredness, or nausea. Ask your doctor for a full list of possible side effects.

### **How do I get started on Apretude?**

- Before starting Apretude, you need to get an HIV test to confirm you are HIV negative.
- Once your test confirms you are HIV negative, you will schedule your first injection at Michigan Medicine. We will give you the second injection 28 days (4 weeks) after the first, and then every 2 months after that.
  - Sticking to the injection schedule is extremely important to keep the medication levels effective in your body. Missing doses can increase your risk of getting HIV.
  - You will need to get an HIV test and other STI testing before each dose.
- If you decide to stop taking Apretude, talk with your doctor about how to do it safely. You will need to take oral PrEP (one of the PrEP pill options) for a while as the medication leaves your system. If you are late for a dose of Apretude by more than 7 days, you should take oral PrEP to prevent resistant HIV infection.

### **Apretude dose schedule:**

- Day 0: First Apretude injection
- Day 28 (4 weeks later): Second Apretude injection
- Every 56 days (every 2 months): Ongoing Apretude injections

- Keeping close to the 56-day schedule is best, but you can shift by up to 7 days before or after the scheduled injection if needed.

### **Other details about your Apretude injections:**

A nurse at Michigan Medicine will give you the Apretude injection (shot). Each injection is 3 milliliters (ml). We will give you this shot into the muscle of your butt, switching between the right and left sides. Pain and redness at the injection site are common, and using cold compresses like ice packs can help with the discomfort. The pain should not be so bad that it interferes with your daily activities.

### **Will my insurance pay for Apretude?**

Insurance coverage for Apretude varies. Before starting Apretude, check with your insurance about prior authorization (approval processes required by your insurance provider before they'll cover a medication or service) and making sure you have coverage to avoid high costs. If your insurance doesn't cover it, there are resources from the Apretude manufacturer to help you with the costs.

### **What are my next 3 steps to start on Apretude?**

1. Check your insurance coverage and costs for Apretude.
2. Your nurse will help you schedule your injections based on availability at an injection clinic located at certain infusion centers.
3. Confirm you are HIV negative with a test 4-7 days before each dose.

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Authors: James Riddell IV, MD, Mark Cichocki, RN  
Edited by: Brittany Batell, MPH MSW CHES®

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