



## **Postexposure prophylaxis: an intervention to prevent human immunodeficiency virus infection in adolescents.**

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Postexposure prophylaxis is an effective intervention to prevent transmission of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Administration of antiretroviral medications within 72 hours of a percutaneous or mucous membrane exposure to HIV can prevent infection. The use of postexposure prophylaxis for occupational and perinatal HIV exposures is well established. Its efficacy for nonoccupational exposures has only recently been studied. To date in the United States, there are no national guidelines regarding postexposure prophylaxis for nonoccupational exposures. Decisions regarding its use should be made after weighing the risks of seroconversion for a given exposure, the risks of HIV in the source, and the potential toxicities of the antiretroviral medications. Several state guidelines may also serve as important resources. Clinicians should consider initiating postexposure prophylaxis in adolescents for any oral, anal, or vaginal exposure to definitely or possibly HIV-infected blood or body fluids. Adolescents treated should be followed closely for medication toxicity, acute seroconversion, and risk-reduction counseling. Further studies are needed to characterize the use and efficacy of postexposure prophylaxis in an adolescent population.