

PEPSE Starter Packs

After your consultation with the Doctor, if it has been agreed that you should take PEPSE, you may have been given the treatment for the first 5 days as a starter pack.

Important Points to Remember:

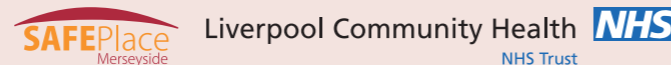
- Take the tablets as directed and at the times directed.
- Attend GUM clinic as advised to collect the rest of your medication and have baseline blood tests taken.
- You may also be offered tests (which may include swabs, urine tests and blood tests) to be sure you are clear from any infection.
- Repeats of the tests in 2 weeks and 3 months to be sure your status re: HIV infection.
- Vaccination for Hepatitis B infection (if you did not have it whilst at **SAFE Place**) this is another virus you may have been exposed to.

- If you know you cannot take the tablets for a whole month (i.e. finish the course) then it may be better not to start them.
- Instead, you should arrange a blood test at the GUM clinic in 3 months to check your status regarding HIV.

For further advice contact one of the GUM Services in Greater Merseyside

Great Charlotte Street	0151 285 3535
Royal Liverpool GUM	0151 706 2620
Arrowe Park GUM	0151 604 7339
Halton General GUM	01928 753 217
St Helens GUM	01744 646 473
Southport District GUM	01704 513 303

SAFE Place Merseyside provided by Liverpool Community Health NHS Trust and is supported by the Home Office, Merseyside Police, Merseyside Police Authority, Liverpool City Safe Partnership, Merseyside NHS Primary Care Trusts and Local Authorities.



Useful Contacts

Home Office

Can provide details of other SARCS throughout the Country

www.homeoffice.gov.org

Rape Crisis Centres

Helpline: **0808 802 9999**

www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Refuge - for Women & Children

Helpline: **0808 2000 247**

www.refuge.org.uk

Rights of Women

Helpline: **020 7251 8887**

www.rightsofwomen.org.uk

Samaritans

Helpline: **0845 790 9090**

www.samaritans.org

Survivors UK - for Men only

Helpline: **0845 122 1201**

www.survivorsuk.org

Victim Support

Helpline: **0845 30 30 900**

www.victimsupport.org

SAFE Place Merseyside Sexual Assault Referral Centre
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SAFEPlace Merseyside



Questions & Answers about PEPSE

SAFE Place Merseyside is a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).

This leaflet gives information for clients who have undergone a forensic medical examination

Telephone: **0151 295 3550**
www.safeplacemerseyside.org.uk

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What is PEPSE?

PEPSE stands for **P**ost-**E**xposure **P**rophylaxis after **S**exual **E**xposure. It is medicine that tries to clear your body of any HIV virus that you might have come in contact with during your assault.

Have I definitely been in touch with the HIV virus?

No, you have not definitely been in touch with the HIV virus. We can not be certain whether you have or not. Your Doctor has made an assessment of the likely risks based on the following factors:

- What is known about the person who attacked you and how likely it is that they are carrying the HIV virus.
- What happened during the assault
- What was found during your examination

Do I need PEPSE?

Contact with blood, saliva or semen may put you at risk but only if the person who attacked you has HIV. Factors that may increase the risk are:

- Penetration of mouth/anus/vagina
- Injuries that cause bleeding
- More than one person involved in the assault

Q: Do I have to take PEPSE?

A: The Forensic Medical Examiner (Doctor) will advise you if there are strong reasons why you should take PEPSE but as with any other service here at **SAFE Place** it is always your choice.

If you aren't sure what to do, it may help to talk it through with your crisis worker or one of the specialist doctors at GUM clinic. There is a time limit of 72 hours (3 days) after the assault when you have to take PEPSE if you decide to take it. It is not effective after this time.

Q: When should I start PEPSE?

A: It can be started anytime within 72 hours (3 days) after an assault but to be at its most effective it should ideally be started within 12 hours.

Q: Is PEPSE a cure for HIV?

A: PEPSE may reduce the risk of HIV if it is taken very soon after you have been exposed to the virus.

Unfortunately, once HIV infection takes hold and becomes permanent then anti HIV drugs may not get rid of HIV from your body. Once HIV permanently infects someone, medication can control the HIV.

Q: What do I have to do?

A: Having PEPSE treatment means taking a combination of anti HIV drugs for 4 weeks. These tablets work together to prevent HIV infection.

For them to work it is vitally important that you:

- Take them on time as directed
- Take the whole course for 4 weeks

Q: How will I feel?

A: You might feel unwell on the drugs. The most common side effects are:

- Diarrhoea
- Feeling Sick
- Vomiting
- Headaches
- Tiredness

If any of the side effects are really affecting you, you can ask the GUM clinic to prescribe some medication to stop the side effects and they will stop when you finish your course.