

# PL4: ARE WE SAYING THE RIGHT THINGS YET? TESTING KEY DOXY PEP MESSAGES WITH POTENTIAL CONSUMERS

## Handout for Poster PL4: ARE WE SAYING THE RIGHT THINGS YET? TESTING KEY DOXY PEP MESSAGES WITH POTENTIAL CONSUMERS

STI Prevention Conference 2024  
Poster Session

### Author Contact

Elizabeth Finley, National Coalition of STD Directors  
[efinley@ncsddc.org](mailto:efinley@ncsddc.org)

### Key Takeaway

Potential doxy PEP users need info about cost, side effects, effectiveness, drug interactions, and how to get doxy PEP, and clearer messages on when to take doxy PEP.

### Participant Demographics

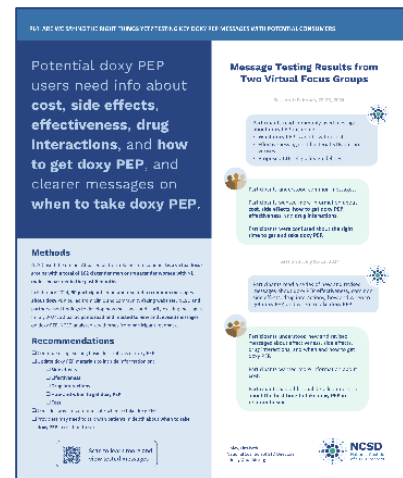
**Recruitment Parameters** – Participants were recruited based on their gender identity and the gender and number of their sex partners in the past six months. The session was open to cisgender men and transgender women who had more than one male sex partner in the past six months.

**Black and Latino participants were intentionally oversampled** –51% of participants were Black, 24% were Hispanic or Latino, 13% were Asian, and 10% were white.

**Thirty-seven percent of participants were from the South** – Twenty-six percent were from the Northeast, 22% from the West, and 15% from the Midwest.

**Most participants were bisexual and most had female sex partners in the past 12 months** – Fifty-six percent of participants were bisexual, 38% were gay, and 5% were straight. Seventy-one percent of participants had a female sex partner in the past 12 months.

**More than half are on PrEP or want to be on PrEP.** – Thirty-one percent of participants are currently on PrEP and 23% are not on PrEP but want to be. Eight percent of participants are on ART and 3% want to be.



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## Useful Messages

The following key messages were tested during NCSD's second Remesh session. These messages were developed or revised to address key information needs identified by participants in the first Remesh session in February.

**Explaining doxy PEP** – Provides a description of what doxy PEP is.

*“Recent research shows that taking doxycycline within 72 hours of having sex can help some people reduce the chances of getting syphilis, gonorrhea, or chlamydia. This prevention strategy is called doxy PEP.”*

**Effectiveness, Side Effects, and Drug Interactions** – Includes updated messages on effectiveness and side effects and adds new information on drug interactions. Participants understood these messages, but some wanted to know how to mitigate side effects.

- *Doxy PEP can only help prevent chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis. It does not prevent other STIs, like HIV, mpox, or herpes.*
- *Doxy PEP is not 100% effective, but it can reduce your likelihood of contracting syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia.*
- *The dose of doxycycline used in doxy PEP is not strong enough to treat an STI if you have one. If you think you might have an STI, you should visit a health care provider. Regular STI screening is important to identify and treat STIs.*
- *Doxy PEP is safe to take with PrEP for HIV, ART, and most gender-affirming hormones. Doxycycline, the medicine used for doxy PEP, can interact with some common medications. A healthcare provider or pharmacist can tell you more about how doxycycline might interact with other medications you take.*
- *Doxy PEP may cause side effects like upset stomach and nausea.*
- *Doxy PEP may make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. Protecting your skin from the sun is important while you are using doxy PEP.*

**When to Take Doxy PEP** – Includes updated messages on when to take doxy PEP. Participants understood this information but had specific questions like whether effectiveness changed over the 72-hour time frame.

- *Take 200 mg of doxycycline as soon as possible, but no later than 72 hours, after anal, oral, or vaginal/front-hole sex.*
- *Doxy PEP is safe to take each day you need it, but do not take more than 200 mg of doxycycline in a 24-hour time period.*

**When and How to Get Doxy PEP** – New message that addressed how and when to get doxy PEP, specifically the need for a prescription and having doxy PEP before needing it.

*“Talk to your healthcare provider if you think doxy PEP makes sense for you. Have an open and honest conversation about your sexual health. This can help your healthcare provider decide if doxy PEP is right for you, write a prescription so that you can have the medicine with you when you need it, and discuss other ways to protect your sexual health.”*

The messages above are helpful for addressing side effects, effectiveness, when to take doxy PEP and how to get doxy PEP. The messages do not provide requested information on costs, and do not fully address questions about when to take doxy PEP.