

ECDC Scope and purpose document

Directly transmitted and Vaccine-preventable Diseases Unit/STI, Blood-Borne Viruses and TB Section

Webinar: Doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis (doxy-PEP) for the prevention of bacterial STIs: evidence and public health considerations

21 October 2026, 15:00-16:30 CET, online
Specific contract No 1 ECD.20983

Background

For more than a decade, bacterial sexually transmitted infections (STIs) have been increasing across the European Union (EU) and European Economic Area (EEA). Men who have sex with men, particularly those living with HIV or using HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis, are overrepresented in case notifications for bacterial STIs such as gonorrhoea, syphilis, lymphogranuloma venereum, and, more recently, chlamydia[1-4]. While enhanced testing may partly explain these increases, they also highlight the need to optimise existing prevention strategies and explore new approaches.

In clinical trials, conducted among individuals at increased risk of bacterial STIs, including gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men and transgender women using HIV PrEP or living with HIV, doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis (doxy-PEP) has shown to be effective in reducing chlamydia and syphilis incidence [5-7]. Doxy-PEP is defined as taking a single 200 mg dose of doxycycline within the first 24 hours and no longer than 72 hours after condomless sex. Evidence from real-world settings also suggest that doxy-PEP can be effective when integrated into comprehensive sexual health strategies for individuals at high risk of acquiring an STI [8].

However, its wider use could lead to a non-negligible increase in overall antibiotic consumption across Europe [9]. Research indicates that doxy-PEP may contribute to the development of antimicrobial resistance in targeted bacterial pathogens and bystander organisms, not only among doxy-PEP users, but also among non-users, such as those within sexual networks, the wider community of men who have sex with men, and potentially, the broader population [10-14].

Across the EU/EEA, existing guidelines on doxy-PEP vary[8]. Some authorities recommend its use on a case-by-case basis, primarily for syphilis prevention among men who have sex with men and transgender women at high risk of acquiring an STI, while others advise against it. These differing positions reflect ongoing uncertainty regarding the public health benefits of this prophylactic intervention balanced with its potential harms, particularly the risk of increasing antimicrobial resistance. Regardless of national recommendations, doxy-PEP use is expanding among men who have sex with men in the EU/EEA, both through off-label medical prescription and self-sourcing.

In January 2026, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) published the [Public health considerations on the use of doxycycline for post-exposure prophylaxis \(doxy-PEP\) for bacterial sexually transmitted infections \(STIs\) in the EU/EEA](#) [8]. This scientific advice document was informed by an evidence review and consultation with a scientific expert panel and provides public health considerations on the use of doxycycline for STI prophylaxis for the EU/EEA, to support decision-making in the Region. In September 2026, ECDC has also released a guide to support consistent monitoring of doxy-PEP use and its impact on STI trends and antimicrobial resistance [15].

Aims and objectives

The overall aim of this webinar is to provide information, clarify key concepts and support evidence-informed decision-making on the use of doxy-PEP as part of comprehensive and integrated sexual health and bacterial STI prevention strategies in the EU/EEA.

At the end of the webinar, participants will have:

- Acquired knowledge on the effectiveness, benefits and limitations of doxy-PEP for preventing bacterial STIs in clinical trial and real-world settings;
- Enhanced their understanding of evidence-based and community-informed doxy-PEP resources in the EU/EEA; and
- Identified key clinical, policy and programme considerations for implanting doxy-PEP guidance and recommendations into practice.

Target audience

This webinar is aimed toward (i) public health professionals, national authorities, policy makers, experts involved in STI prevention, control, monitoring and antimicrobial resistance surveillance in the EU/EEA, (ii) healthcare providers, and (iii) civil society and community organisations involved in sexual health promotion and service delivery.

Platform, format and approach

The webinar will be hosted online using Zoom for a duration of 90 minutes. The format will include expert plenary presentations, a panel discussion and open Q&A.

Background materials

We have selected relevant documents related to the webinar content as background material. These materials provide support to the planned webinar presentations and discussions:

- [ECDC: Public health considerations on the use of doxycycline for post-exposure prophylaxis for bacterial sexually transmitted infections in the EU/EEA \(2025\)](#)
- [ECDC: Doxycycline prophylaxis for bacterial sexually transmitted infections: a guide for data collection in the EU/EEA \(2026\)](#)
- [ECDC Infographic Social Media Cards: Doxy-PEP and you: What to know \(2026\)](#)
- [ECDC Annual Epidemiological STI Reports \(2026\)](#)
- [ECDC Monitoring of the responses to sexually transmitted infection epidemics in EU/EEA countries, 2024 \(2025\)](#)
- [European AIDS Clinical Society \(EACS\): Prophylaxis for Bacterial STIs – DoxyPEP \(2025\)](#)
- [International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections \(IUSTI\) Europe: position statement on the use of Doxy-PEP \(2024\)](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\): Guideline on doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis for sexually transmitted infections among men who have sex with men and transgender women \(2026\)](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\): Technical information: Doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis for sexually transmitted infections prevention \(2026\)](#)
- [European AIDS Treatment Group \(EATG\): Community infonote on Doxy-PEP](#)
- [The Love Tank: Little back pocket guide to Doxy-PEP](#)

Provisional agenda

21 October 2026, 15:00-16:30 CET	
Time	Purpose and activity
15:00	Welcome, house rules and webinar objectives
15:05	Current STI epidemiological trends in the EU/EEA - can doxy-PEP help?
15:15	Doxy-PEP: current research/evidence
15:30	Community perspectives on doxy-PEP: current use and public health messaging
15:40	From clinical trials to consultation room: balancing benefits, risks in clinical practice
15:50	Moderated Q&A and panel discussion
16:25	Evaluation and closing

Expected outputs and evaluations

Before the webinar concludes, participants will be asked to respond to two standardised evaluation questions. A General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)-compliant webinar recording will be publicly accessible for later viewing on the ECDC Learning Portal for infectious diseases.

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References

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