
Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) in Virginia

- Fact Sheet for Pharmacists -

What is EPT?

Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) is the clinical practice of treating the sex partners of patients diagnosed with sexually transmitted infections (STIs) without an intervening medical evaluation. It is also sometimes referred to as patient-delivered partner therapy (PDPT). It is an evidence-based strategy for treating partners who are otherwise unlikely or unable to obtain a timely medical assessment.

EPT in Virginia

As of July 1, 2021, the Code of Virginia [[Section §54.1-3303.B](#)] was revised to allow practitioners to prescribe antibiotic therapy for the sexual partner(s) of a patient diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease, without first establishing the bona fide practitioner-patient relationship normally required, when providing EPT consistent with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [treatment recommendations](#). EPT prescriptions in Virginia may be dispensed either with or without the partner's name on the prescription. Pharmacists can legally fill a prescription with the designation of 'EPT' even when the sex partner's name, address, and date of birth are not listed on the prescription.

Who is Eligible for EPT?

People are eligible for EPT when their sexual partner has a laboratory confirmed or clinical diagnosis of chlamydia or gonorrhea infection and they are unable or unlikely to see a doctor for testing and treatment. EPT is appropriate for the index patient's known sexual partners in the previous 60 days, or most recent sexual partners if there are no partners in the previous 60 days. There are no restrictions on the use of EPT based on patient/partner age or gender.

How should Pharmacists Fill EPT Prescriptions?

If the prescription is missing the partner's name, the pharmacists should affix 'EPT' or 'Expedited Partner Therapy' to the written prescription and the medication label. Medication costs may be self-pay (paid by the person who picks up the prescription) or paid by the sex partner's health insurance. EPT prescriptions without the partner's name cannot legally be billed to the index patient's insurance or the partner's insurance, and should instead be billed as a cash only prescription. If the partner is unnamed, the practice in other states has been to create a unique identifier and use that instead of a name for both labeling and record keeping purposes. If known, the pharmacist may write the partner's name on the prescription and bill it to the partner's insurance.

Counseling for EPT

Pharmacists who dispense EPT should counsel partners to seek medical care and provide medication instructions; provide warnings about adverse allergic reactions; and advise to abstain from sexual activity for 7-10 days after single dose antibiotics (or to wear a condom with each sex act if assistance is not possible). In addition, pharmacists must ask whether the patient is allergic to the prescribed medication, and advise discontinuing the medication if the partner has a known allergy or develops signs of an allergic reaction after taking the medicine.

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Recommended Treatment Regimens for EPT

Index Patient Diagnosis	EPT Treatment Regimen
Chlamydia (only)	Doxycycline 100 mg twice daily for 7 days*
Gonorrhea (only)	Cefixime (e.g. Suprax) 800 mg orally once
Gonorrhea (with confirmed or suspected chlamydia co-infection)	Cefixime (e.g. Suprax) 800 mg orally once PLUS Doxycycline 100 mg twice daily for 7 days*

**Substitute Azithromycin 1 gram orally as a single dose for partners who may be pregnant or unlikely to adhere to a 7-day regimen.*

Adverse Reactions

While no adverse events and/or life threatening allergic reactions have been reported to date, report any EPT-related adverse events to the Virginia Department of Health at 1-800-533-4148 or email hiv-stdhotline@vdh.virginia.gov.

Pharmacist Resources

Additional EPT information and written material for patients and their sex partners are available for download on the [VDH website](#) under 'Clinical Resources'.