Frequently Asked Questions
Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) for the Treatment of Chlamydia and Gonorrhea

1. What is expedited partner therapy (EPT)?

Expedited partner therapy (EPT) is the clinical practice of treating sexual partners of patients diagnosed with chlamydia and/or gonorrhea without the healthcare provider first examining the partner. EPT usually involves patient-delivered partner therapy (PDPT), in which an extra dose of medication or a prescription is given to a patient with chlamydia and/or gonorrhea to deliver to their sexual partner(s). In 2008, EPT became legal in Arizona (Arizona Revised Statute 32-1401.27 and 32-1854).

2. Is EPT medication the same for chlamydia and gonorrhea?

No, it is not. If a patient is infected with chlamydia only, recommended EPT is a single dose of azithromycin 1 gm orally. If a patient is infected with gonorrhea only, recommended EPT is cefixime 800 mg orally. If a patient is infected with both chlamydia and gonorrhea, recommended EPT for non-pregnant partners is cefixime 800 mg orally **AND** 100 mg doxycycline twice a day for 7 days.

3. When should I offer EPT?

Under current guidelines, every effort should be made to ensure that a patient's sex partners from the past 60 days are evaluated and treated with the recommended treatment for chlamydia and/or gonorrhea. However, because that is not always possible, providers should consider EPT when it is unlikely that the partner will seek timely evaluation and treatment. Patient and partner EPT information sheets should be included along with the medication or prescription for the partner. You can find EPT information sheets on the Arizona Department of Health Services STD website in the Healthcare Provider Resources section.

4. Can I prescribe medication for EPT without a name on the prescription?

No. The partner's name must be on the prescription in order for it to be filled at a pharmacy.

5. Can I prescribe medication for EPT with the patient and partner's name on the same prescription?

No. Two separate prescriptions should be written to avoid confusion regarding medication dispensing, medication counseling, and insurance coverage.

6. Who will assume the cost for the partner's medication?

Medication costs will have to be paid for by the person who picks up the prescription. Some medical offices may choose to dispense medications to both patients and partners at no cost.

7. Can the pharmacy bill the partner's medication under the patient's insurance?

No. Billing the partner's prescription under the patient's name could be considered fraudulent.

8. Can I just write my patient's prescription with one extra refill for their partner? Or, write my patient's prescription for twice as many pills?

No. This may be considered fraudulent for insurance billing purposes.

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9. Are healthcare practitioners that do not hold an MD allowed to provide EPT for their patients?

Yes. Registered physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and allopathic, naturopathic, or osteopathic physicians in Arizona are allowed to provide EPT as determined by Arizona Revised Statute §32-1401.27 and 32-1854.

10. Who assumes the risk for adverse events associated with the medication prescribed?

Medical providers assume liability for all medications dispensed or prescribed. EPT is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and was endorsed by the American Bar Association in August 2008. No adverse events and/or life-threatening allergic reactions to these medications when dispensed as EPT have been reported to date.

11. If a partner is allergic to azithromycin or cefixime what are the alternatives?

If the partner is known to be allergic to these medications, EPT is not appropriate and the partner should be referred to a physician for an alternative regimen.

12. What if the partner has medication allergies or contraindications that the patient is unaware of?

Medical providers assume liability for all medications dispensed or prescribed. No adverse events and/or life-threatening allergic reactions to these medications when dispensed as EPT have been reported to date. Patient and partner information sheets should be included along with the medication or prescription for the partner. These sheets contain information on the need to consider medication interactions and allergic reactions. You can find EPT information sheets on the Arizona Department of Health Services STD website in the Healthcare Provider Resources section. Advise your patient to read this and to have his/her partner read this before taking the medication. Patients and their partners should call the clinic or pharmacy with any questions.

13. Is EPT safe for partners who are pregnant?

The recommended EPT regimens for chlamydia and gonorrhea are considered safe in pregnancy. However, every effort should be made to contact the pregnant partner to ensure linkage to prenatal care.

For more information visit:

The CDC website on Expedited Partner Therapy:
https://www.cdc.gov/std/ept/

The CDC report on Expedited Partner Therapy in the management of sexually transmitted diseases:
http://www.cdc.gov/std/Treatment/EPTFinalReport2006.pdf

The Update to the CDC's Treatment Guidelines for Gonococcal Infection, 2020:
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/pdfs/mm6950a6-H.pdf

The Arizona Department of Health Services STD website:
https://www.azdhs.gov/std

Or contact:

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