



Expanding HIV prevention options, especially for women
www.global-campaign.org

The Global Campaign for Microbicides

The Global Campaign for Microbicides (GCM) is a civil society organization working to ensure the ethical and accelerated development and widespread access to new and existing HIV-prevention options—especially for women.

Without vested interest in any particular product or technology, GCM serves as a trusted convener of people and ideas. GCM works collaboratively with policymakers, civil society, researchers, and industry to develop and share resources, inform and develop policy, identify and promote better practices, and build and strengthen the capacity of the HIV-prevention field—with a special focus on microbicides and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

Microbicides (Mĭ-KRO'-bĭ-sĭdz) are a new type of product being developed that people could use vaginally or rectally to protect themselves from HIV and possibly other sexually transmitted infections. Microbicides could be produced in a number of forms, including gels, creams, films, suppositories, lubricants, or delivered through a sponge or a vaginal ring that slowly releases the active ingredient

Founded in 1998, GCM works to ensure that as research proceeds, the rights and interests of women, potential end-users, trial participants, and communities are represented and respected.

PrEP stands for “pre-exposure prophylaxis.” It means using medicine in advance (before you are exposed to something) to prevent yourself from getting a disease or condition. Here we are referring to the idea of HIV-negative people taking antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) in order to reduce their risk of becoming infected with HIV if they are exposed to it.

Today's HIV prevention options—condoms, mutual monogamy, and STI treatment—are not feasible for millions of people around the world, especially women. Many women do not have the social or economic power necessary to insist on condom use and fidelity or to abandon partnerships that put them at risk. Because microbicides would not require a partner's cooperation, they would put the power to protect into women's hands. HIV prevention advocates urge involvement in this field, recognizing that it may help address the gender inequalities that lead to the health disparities between men and women.

Specifically, the goals of the Global Campaign for Microbicides are to:

- **Mobilize and sustain political will:** Build citizen demand and governmental support for the timely development, introduction and use of new HIV prevention technologies, particularly for women
- **Promote stronger civil society involvement:** Strengthen capacity and expand opportunities for advocates and communities to engage with research and clinical trials productively.
- **Enable trials:** Identify ethical challenges and policy obstacles to the timely implementation of HIV prevention trials and broker the open, well-informed discussion and cross-sectoral consensus building needed to resolve them.

GCM pursues its work through a small core staff and through partner organisations to undertake activities that directly advance the organization's goals. The Campaign Secretariat is housed at PATH, an international, non-profit, nongovernmental organisation that improves the health of people around the world.

- AIDS is the leading cause of death and disease among women of reproductive age (15-49 years) worldwide.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, 60% of people living with HIV are women.

GCM urges policymakers to invest in evidence-based HIV prevention: to fund microbicides and PrEP research and development, including support for clinical and pre-clinical research, community involvement in product research and development, ethical trial management, and HIV prevention advocacy.