



Types of COVID-19 Treatment

MAY 8, 2025

⚠ COVID-19 VACCINE RECOMMENDATIONS

COVID-19 vaccine recommendations have recently been updated for some populations. This page will be updated to align with the updated immunization schedule.
[Learn more.](#)

KEY POINTS

- If you have COVID-19 and are more likely to get very sick, medications are available that can reduce your risk of hospitalization and death.
- Don't delay: Treatments must be started within 5-7 days after you first develop symptoms to be effective.



COVID-19 Treatment Options

Testing for COVID-19

Testing for COVID-19 can help you decide what to do next, like getting treatment to reduce your risk of severe illness and taking steps to lower your chances of spreading the virus to others.

If you think you could have COVID-19 and are at higher risk for severe illness, talk to your healthcare provider about testing and/or treatment right away, even if your symptoms are mild. If you don't have a healthcare provider, contact your local pharmacy, community health center, or health department.

Don't Delay



Treatment must be started within 5-7 days of when your symptoms first start. You do not need a positive test to start treatment so if you get sick and are at high risk for severe illness, talk to your healthcare provider as soon as possible.

People who are more likely to get very sick include:

- [Older adults](#) (especially those ages 65 years or older, with risk increasing with advancing age)
- People who are unvaccinated or are not [up to date](#) on their COVID-19 vaccinations
- [People with certain medical conditions](#), such as chronic lung disease, heart disease, or a weakened immune system.

Treatments

FDA has authorized or approved several antiviral medications used to treat mild to moderate COVID-19 in people who are more likely to get very sick.

- **Antiviral medications** target specific parts of the virus to stop it from multiplying in the body once someone is infected, helping to prevent severe illness and death.
- The Infectious Diseases Society of America provides [Guidelines on the Treatment and Management of Patients with COVID-19](#) for healthcare providers to help them work with their patients and determine the best treatment options for their patients. Several treatment options are available for treating COVID-19. They include:

COVID-19 Treatment	Who (Among people who are at high risk of getting sick)	When	How
<u>Nirmatrelvir with Ritonavir (Paxlovid)</u> 	Adults; children ages 12 years and older	Start as soon as possible; must begin within 5 days of when symptoms start	Taken at home by mouth (orally)
<u>Veklury (remdesivir)</u> 	Adults and children	Start as soon as possible; must begin within 7 days of when symptoms start	Intravenous (IV) infusions at a healthcare facility for 3 consecutive days
<u>Molnupiravir (Lagevrio)</u> 	Adults	Start as soon as possible; must begin within 5 days of when symptoms start	Taken at home by mouth (orally)

Some treatments might have side effects or interact with other medications you are taking. Side effects vary for each medication. For example, Paxlovid can cause a metallic taste in your mouth which goes away when you stop taking the medication. Paxlovid is more likely to interact with other medications than other COVID-19 antivirals, but most people can still take it.

Check for possible interactions with your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you are taking other medications to make sure that COVID-19 treatments can be safely taken at the same time.

If you are hospitalized, your healthcare provider might use other types of medications, depending on how sick you are. These could include medications to treat the virus, reduce an overactive immune response, or treat COVID-19 complications.

If you have a weakened immune system, have received antiviral treatment, and continue to experience COVID-19 symptoms, your healthcare provider may recommend additional treatment, including convalescent plasma.

Accessing Treatment

Visit Treatment Locator (hhs.gov) or call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489) to find a location that offers testing and treatment or a pharmacy where you can fill your prescription.

Did you know?

COVID-19 oral antiviral treatments Paxlovid and Lagevrio are available for certain people at a lower cost. Patient assistance programs are available to people who are underinsured, uninsured, who are on Medicaid, and certain people on Medicare to lower their out-of-pocket costs. You should enroll in these programs to learn if you can receive assistance for specific medications, regardless of your insurance status. Call ahead to your healthcare provider and insurer to confirm coverage eligibility.

People have been seriously harmed (and have even died) after taking products not approved for use to treat or prevent COVID-19, even if they were approved or prescribed for other uses. Talk to a healthcare provider about taking medications to treat COVID-19.

Preventing COVID-19

COVID-19 Vaccines

A COVID-19 vaccine is the first step to prevent severe health outcomes. Antiviral treatments are not a replacement for COVID-19 vaccinations.

COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States effectively protect people from getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, and even dying. As with vaccines for other diseases, you are protected best when you stay up to date.

Where to find free COVID-19 vaccines this season

Free COVID-19 vaccines may be available through private health insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, public health safety net programs, and CDC's Vaccines for Children Program.

[Find your free COVID-19 vaccine](#)

People with weakened immune systems, who are at higher risk for severe COVID-19 and might have decreased response to vaccination, may require additional doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

KEEP READING

[Vaccines for Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised People](#)

Alongside vaccination, practicing core prevention strategies like good hygiene, taking steps for cleaner air, and staying home when sick is vital in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (Medication for Preventing COVID-19)

FDA has [authorized](#) a preventive monoclonal antibody for people who are [moderately or severely immunocompromised](#), ages 12 years and older, and weigh at least 88 pounds. In addition to vaccination, [Pemivibart \(Pembarda™\)](#) may provide another layer of protection against COVID-19 and can be given at least 2 weeks after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

A healthcare provider gives Pembarda as a single intravenous infusion over 60 minutes at a doctor's office or healthcare facility. If continued protection is needed, additional doses should be administered every 3 months.

People who are privately insured or have Medicare part B may receive Pembarda for free. Talk to your healthcare provider to see if Pembarda is right for you. CDC is monitoring variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 and how commonly they occur to understand if they might affect how well Pembarda works. The FDA will provide additional updates to the Emergency Use Authorization materials, as appropriate, if new information emerges. This is the only preventive option available for COVID-19 for the immunocompromised community, as described above, at the present time.

Recovery

Manage Symptoms

Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and can recover at home. You can treat symptoms with over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen, to help feel better.

COVID-19 Rebound

COVID-19 rebound is a return of symptoms or a new positive test 3-7 days after:

- recovering from the initial illness, or
- having tested negative for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

People may experience rebound whether they received COVID-19 antiviral medication or not. Rebound symptoms are typically mild and resolve in a few days.

Studies suggest there is no increased risk of severe COVID-19 illness in people who experience COVID-19 rebound after antiviral medication.

The benefits of COVID-19 treatment outweigh the risk of rebound if you are at high risk for severe COVID-19. Talk to your healthcare provider if you think you may have rebound. If you don't have a healthcare provider, contact your local community health center or health department.

Resources

General Treatment Resources

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Drugs](#)
- [COVID-19 Therapeutics Locator](#)

Oral Antiviral Treatment Resources

- [What Are Oral Antivirals?](#)
- [PAXCESS™ Patient Support Program \[PDF – 4 pages\]](#)
- [Paxlovid | HHS/ASPR](#)
- [Merck Patient Assistance Program](#)
- [Gilead's Advancing Access](#)
- [U.S. Government Patient Assistance \(USG PAP\)](#)
- [Liverpool COVID-19 Interactions](#)

SOURCES

CONTENT SOURCE:

National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases; Coronavirus and Other Respiratory Viruses Division