COVID-19 Treatments Questions & Answers

We have new, effective tools to take good care of ourselves if we get COVID-19.

COVID-19 treatments are safe, free, widely available, and highly effective at preventing COVID-19 illness from becoming serious. They can stop the virus from multiplying in your body, help you test negative sooner, and may reduce the risk of developing long COVID symptoms.

WHAT are COVID-19 treatments?

Medications that can **stop COVID-19 illness from getting serious**. They are free, widely available, and highly effective. Some can be taken at home by pill and others are given by IV.

WHY should I take a COVID-19 treatment?

Scientific evidence shows that COVID-19 treatments work to prevent serious illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19 by **up to 88%**. For example, people who take Paxlovid are **up to 8 times less likely to need hospitalization and 10 times less likely to die from COVID-19**.

Early evidence also suggests they may **lower the risk of developing long COVID symptoms**.

Treatments like the Paxlovid pill can also **prevent the virus from multiplying in your body and infecting more of your cells**, which can help you **test negative sooner**.

WHEN should I take a COVID-19 treatment?

Treatments must be taken **within 5-7 days of when symptoms begin**. So if you start to feel sick, **act fast** to get a COVID-19 test and free treatment.

Get treatment while your illness is mild – **don't wait until your illness gets worse**.

WHO should take COVID-19 treatment?

COVID-19 treatments are recommended for **anyone 12 years and older who has COVID-19 symptoms, has tested positive for COVID-19, and has certain experiences and conditions** that put them at higher risk for worse COVID-19 illness, such as being 50 years and older, being unvaccinated, obesity, physical inactivity, high blood pressure smoking, asthma, diabetes, mental health conditions like depression, and more.

In fact, most American adults are eligible and should take COVID-19 treatment.

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WHERE do I get COVID-19 treatments?

You have multiple options. You do not need to have insurance or U.S. citizenship.

- **Call your doctor** or urgent care center.
- Find a **Test-to-Treat location**, like a free Optum Serve Center, near you. To find a site, call the statewide COVID-19 hotline at 833-422-4255.
- Make a **free phone or video appointment** through California's free telehealth provider and talk to a health care provider the same or next day. Call 833-686-5051 or go to sesamecare.com/covidca.
- Some **pharmacies**, such as CVS and Walgreens, have pharmacists that may be able to give you a prescription for treatment. Call your pharmacy to see if they offer this service.

Call the statewide COVID-19 hotline for questions and help with finding free COVID-19 treatment, at 833-422-4255.

What are the SIDE EFFECTS?

Most people have **no side effects**. The most common side effects for Paxlovid, the most commonly prescribed COVID-19 medication, are mild, such as nausea or a bitter taste.

All COVID-19 treatments are fully approved or authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Federal Drug Administration (FDA) after scientific evidence showed that they are effective for reducing the risk of serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19.

HOW do treatments work?

There are 2 types. Both work to stop COVID-19 illness from becoming serious. A health care provider can tell you what is right for you.

- **Antiviral treatments** stop the virus from multiplying in your body and infecting more of your cells, which can stop COVID-19 illness from becoming serious and also help you to test negative sooner. These include pills called Paxlovid and Molnupiravir that can be taken at home. There is also Remdesivir, which is usually given by a health care provider by IV.
- **Monoclonal antibody treatments** help the immune system recognize and respond better to the virus. These are given by a health care provider by IV.

Are treatments FREE?

Yes! The pill medications are free (the IV medications might have a charge). You do not need to have insurance or be a U.S. citizen. Call the statewide COVID-19 hotline if you were incorrectly charged for COVID-19 pills at 833-422-4255.

What is REBOUND?

A return of mild symptoms and a new positive test a few days after testing negative. This can happen with COVID-19 **regardless of receiving treatment**.

Most people do not have rebound with treatment.

Rebound is **NOT treatment failure** as the medications still work to prevent severe illness. **The risk of rebound is not a reason to avoid treatment**.

For more information on COVID-19 care and treatment, visit covid19.ca.gov/treatment or call the statewide COVID-19 hotline at (833)-422-4255.

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