

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.

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.**

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 **50% to 88%.**

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.**

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 adults and some teens are eligible and should take COVID-19 treatment.

Source: CA Dept. of Public Health

Colleen Chawla - Agency Director | Kimi Watkins-Tartt - Director | Nicholas Moss, MD - Health Officer



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.**
If you have insurance, you can call the number on your insurance card to get help with making an appointment.
- 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](https://www.sesamecare.com/covidca).
- 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.
- 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 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.

The aforementioned 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?

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.

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 US citizen. Call the State 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 if you take treatment or not**.

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.**

In Alameda County

To find more information on COVID-19 care and treatment, visit [covid-19.acgov.org/treatment](https://www.covid-19.acgov.org/treatment) or call the Community Support Line at **(510)-268-2101**

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