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, may 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.**

WHO should take COVID-19 treatment?

All Californians 12 years and older who test positive for COVID-19 and have symptoms should seek evaluation for COVID-19 treatments, which are free regardless of insurance or citizenship status. COVID-19 treatments are recommended **for those who have certain experiences and conditions** that put them at higher risk for worse COVID-19 illness, such as being 50 years and older, not being up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccinations, obesity, physical inactivity, smoking, asthma, diabetes, mental health conditions like depression, being of a racial/ethnic minority, and more.

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

WHY should I take a COVID-19 treatment?

COVID-19 medications are effective for stopping COVID-19 illness from getting serious. Scientific evidence shows they can cut the risk of serious symptoms, hospitalization, and death in half or more.

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**.

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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.**

If you have insurance, you can call the number on your insurance card to get help with making an appointment.

• 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** 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**. Go to **covid19.ca.gov/treatment** if you are eligible but were denied treatment.

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 treatments Paxlovid, Molnupiravir, and Remdesivir are fully approved or authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and 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?

COVID-19 treatments work to stop COVID-19 illness from becoming serious. A health care provider can tell you what is right for you.

There are **antiviral treatments** which stop the virus from multiplying in your body and infecting more of your cells, which can stop COVID-19 illness from becoming serious and may 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.

How much do treatments COST?

COVID-19 treatments are free, regardless of insurance or citizenship status. 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 of if you take treatment.**

Most people do not have rebound with treatment.

Rebound is not treatment failure as the medications still work to prevent severe illness. **The benefits of treatment are greater than the risks of rebound.**

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

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