

COVID-19 Medications Questions & Answers



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

COVID-19 medications 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.

WHEN should I take COVID-19 treatments?

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 medication.

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

WHO should take COVID-19 treatments?

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 COVID-19 treatments?

COVID-19 treatments 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.**

COVID-19 treatments can also prevent the virus from multiplying in your body and infecting more of your cells, which can **help you test negative sooner.**

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.
- Find a **Test-to-Treat location** 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** 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 treatments, at **833-422-4255**. Go to YouCanBeatIt.org if you are eligible but were denied medication.

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.

HOW do COVID-19 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.

COVID-19 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 may help you to test negative sooner.

How much do COVID-19 treatments COST?

COVID-19 medications 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 treatments**.

Most people do not have rebound with treatments.

Rebound from COVID-19 treatments 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 YouCanBeatIt.org or call the statewide COVID hotline at **(833)-422-4255**.