

Frequently Asked Questions About COVID-19 Treatments

People who are at [higher risk for serious COVID-19 illness](#) may be eligible for one of several potentially life-saving COVID-19 treatments. Early intervention with COVID-19 therapeutics can reduce the risk of disease progression and help prevent serious outcomes, including hospitalization and death. These treatments are safe and effective, and are available under U.S. Food and Drug Administration emergency use authorization.

Here are some frequently asked questions about available COVID-19 treatments, eligibility for treatments, timing of treatments, and how to access the treatments.

Q: Should everyone who tests positive get a COVID-19 treatment?

A: Not everyone who tests positive for COVID-19 will need treatment. Most people experience mild-to-moderate symptoms and can recover at home under isolation with rest and over-the-counter fever-reducing medications as needed. People who are age 65 or older, have a weakened immune system, or have certain medical conditions may benefit from therapies because they are at [increased risk of developing serious illness](#). It's best to consult with a healthcare provider right away if you fall into any high-risk categories if you test positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms. The provider will help determine eligibility and connect you with the best treatment options based on your medical history, current medications, and how long you've had symptoms.

Q: What kinds of treatments are available for COVID-19? Who can get them?

A: Patients today who are at [highest risk for serious outcomes from COVID-19](#) could qualify for multiple treatment options. If you are age 65 or older, have a weakened immune system, or have [certain medical conditions](#), please consult with a qualified provider immediately if you have [tested positive for COVID-19](#) or have symptoms to determine the best treatment plan. A prescription is required for all COVID-19 treatments. The first step after a positive COVID-19 test is to contact a healthcare provider. A healthcare provider will review your medical history and current medications, and consider the length of time you've had COVID-19 symptoms, to help determine your eligibility and best path for treatment.

Q: Can you find COVID-19 treatments without a prescription?

A: No. All COVID-19 treatments require a prescription, so the first step after a positive COVID-19 test is to contact a qualified healthcare provider to discuss your treatment options based on [risk factors](#) including age, medical history, and how long you've had symptoms. A healthcare provider also will review your list of current medications to assess any potential drug-to-drug interactions. If you are determined eligible for treatment, your healthcare provider can provide a prescription and connect you with a local pharmacy that can fill the prescription and/or a facility that can provide an intravenous infusion. [COVID-19 treatments are available across Ohio](#) through hospitals and health systems, retail pharmacies, community health centers, and long-term care pharmacies that serve nursing homes.

Q: Is it true that COVID-19 treatments have to start right after a positive test?

A: Time is of the essence with all COVID-19 treatments, as most of these treatments must be administered very quickly after symptom onset to be effective. Oral antiviral pills, for example, should be started within five days of symptom onset, and monoclonal antibody treatments should be started within seven to 10 days of symptom onset, depending on which treatments are effective against the COVID-19 strain that is dominant at any given time. If you are at [high risk for serious illness from COVID-19](#) and tested positive or think you might have COVID-19, it's important to get tested right away. If that test result is positive, consult with a qualified provider to determine eligibility for treatment.

Q: Who is considered high risk for serious illness from COVID-19?

A: Certain people, based on age or medical conditions, are at [higher risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19](#). [Older adults](#) are at highest risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. [The number of deaths among people over age 65 is 97 times higher than the number of deaths among people ages 18-29 years, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) data.](#) In addition,

some people are at [higher risk for serious illness](#) because they are [immunocompromised](#) (weakened immune system) or have [certain medical conditions](#) that make them more vulnerable. Those conditions include, but are not limited to, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, lung disease, liver disease, cystic fibrosis, and solid organ or blood stem cell transplants.

Q: What oral pills are available to treat COVID-19 and how can I get them?

A: If you are at [high risk for serious COVID-19 illness](#) and you have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past five days, you may qualify for prescription oral antiviral pills. Antiviral medications can help your body fight COVID-19 by stopping the virus from multiplying in your cells, which could minimize symptoms and shorten the duration of the illness. This could lower the chances of your illness getting worse and requiring hospitalization.

Two oral antiviral pills are available to treat COVID-19, both available under emergency use authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA):

- **Paxlovid** (Pfizer) – Eligible individuals must be age 12 or older who weigh at least 88 pounds, test positive for COVID-19, and be at [high risk for progression to severe illness from COVID-19](#).
 - Prescription required, and treatment should be initiated as soon as possible after diagnosis of COVID-19 — no later than five days after symptom onset.
 - Paxlovid is not recommended for those with severe kidney disease or who are on dialysis, or those with severe liver disease. Dose adjustments may be required for patients with mild to moderate kidney disease. Healthcare providers should also monitor for possible drug-to-drug interactions and prescribe alternative treatments as needed or make temporary adjustments to other medications during COVID-19 treatment. *Please review the [Paxlovid FDA EUA Fact Sheet](#) for a list of warnings and precautions.*
- **Molnupiravir** (Merck) – Eligible individuals must be age 18 or older, test positive for COVID-19, and be at [high risk for progression to severe illness from COVID-19](#).
 - Prescription required, and should be initiated as soon as possible after diagnosis of COVID-19 — no later than five days after symptom onset.
 - Molnupiravir is not recommended for individuals who are pregnant. Breastfeeding is not recommended during treatment and for four days after the last dose. *Please review the [Molnupiravir FDA EUA Fact Sheet](#) for a list of warnings and precautions.*

If you believe you might be eligible for one of these treatments, consult with a qualified provider to discuss medical history and current medications, and determine the best course of treatment.

Q: What is Remdesivir, and how can I get it?

A: Remdesivir (or Veklury) is an antiviral treatment administered through intravenous infusion. It is available under full FDA approval for adult and pediatric patients (28 days of age and older and weighing at least 6.6 pounds) through hospitals or outpatient treatment locations. Remdesivir was originally approved by the FDA for treating patients hospitalized with COVID-19, and its use was expanded for people who are not hospitalized, but are at [high risk for disease progression](#).

Eligible adults and children must test positive for COVID-19, and be at [high risk for progression to severe illness from COVID-19](#). This is the only available treatment for children younger than age 12 who are at [high risk for serious COVID-19 illness](#). A prescription is required.

- Non-hospitalized patients: Can be used for treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19 in [high-risk patients](#) with a three-day course started within seven days of symptom onset.
- Hospitalized patients: Patients in the hospital with COVID-19 typically receive a five-day course.

If you believe you might be eligible for this treatment, consult with a qualified provider to discuss medical history and current medications, and determine the best course of treatment. Please note: Because Remdesivir is FDA-approved and available on the commercial market, it is not allocated through the federal government and states. This means Remdesivir will not appear on the therapeutic locator maps for the federal government and the state.

Q: What are monoclonal antibodies? Who can receive the treatment?

A: Your body naturally makes antibodies to fight infection. But your body might not have antibodies designed to recognize a new virus like the one that causes COVID-19. Monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) are molecules made in a laboratory to fight a specific infection. They

can mimic the immune system's attack on cells, and give your body the antibodies it needs to protect itself. A mAb treatment could limit the amount of virus in your body, meaning you may have milder symptoms and be less likely to need hospital treatment. These treatments are given by intravenous infusion through a hospital or an outpatient healthcare facility.

The availability and supply of certain COVID-19 therapies can change frequently based on effectiveness against particular variants or subvariants of COVID-19. Currently, one mAb is available for treatment of COVID-19 under emergency use authorization from the FDA:

- **Bebtelovimab** (Eli Lilly and Company) – Eligible individuals must be age 12 or older who weigh at least 88 pounds, test positive for COVID-19, and be at [high risk for progression to severe illness from COVID-19](#).
 - This mAb is the only one effective against the Omicron subvariant BA.2, currently the dominant strain of the virus, for treatment of a positive COVID-19 patient.
 - Prescription required, and should be initiated as soon as possible after diagnosis of COVID-19 — no later than seven days after symptom onset.
 - Bebtelovimab is administered through a single IV infusion lasting approximately 30 seconds.
 - Please review the [Bebtelovimab FDA EUA Fact Sheet](#) for a list of warnings and precautions.

People who believe they might be eligible for a mAb treatment should consult with a qualified provider to discuss medical history and determine the best course of treatment.

Q: Can I just get a COVID-19 treatment if I get COVID-19 instead of a vaccination?

A: The various COVID-19 therapeutics are not meant to be a substitute for vaccination. The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, and offer the best ongoing protection against serious illness from COVID-19. Treatments do not replace the need for ongoing protection that you can get from COVID-19 vaccination, but if you do have COVID-19, these treatments can help you if you are at [high risk for developing serious COVID-19 symptoms](#) or severe outcomes based on your age or medical conditions.

Q: What are the benefits of Evusheld? Who can get it?

A: In some cases, people may not develop a sufficient immune response after COVID-19 vaccination because of a weakened immune system. In other cases, people are unable to receive a COVID-19 vaccination because of a severe reaction to the vaccine or its ingredients. A prescription preventative medication that can be given to offer protection for [high-risk individuals](#) is available under FDA emergency use authorization.

- **Evusheld** (AstraZeneca) – Eligible individuals must be age 12 or older who weigh at least 88 pounds and have certain immunocompromised conditions that make them at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
 - [Evusheld is not a treatment for COVID-19](#). It is a pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) monoclonal antibody treatment that is given as a preventative medication to those who have significant immune disorders or for the few people who have experienced a severe reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine and are unable to receive additional vaccinations.
 - Prescription required.
 - Evusheld consists of two monoclonal antibodies provided together to help prevent infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. Evusheld is administered during one visit with two separate intramuscular injections given one after the other.
 - Evusheld should not be given to anyone currently infected with COVID-19 or exposed to someone with COVID-19.
 - Please review the [Evusheld FDA EUA Fact Sheet](#) for a list of warnings and precautions.

People who believe they might be eligible for Evusheld should consult with a qualified provider to discuss medical history and determine the best ways to stay protected against COVID-19.

Q: I don't have a regular healthcare provider. How can I get a COVID-19 treatment quickly?

A: There are now locations where patients can get tested, have a medical visit, and, if eligible, receive treatment. The national [Test to Treat initiative](#) includes one-stop sites that have healthcare providers available to administer a test, provide timely and thorough assessment, discuss relevant oral antiviral treatment options, and connect you with those treatments quickly. Use the [Test To Treat \(hhs.gov\)](#) locations website to search for Ohio locations near you, or call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489).

If you tested positive at a different location or with an at-home test, you can still go to a [Test to Treat location](#) to talk to a healthcare

provider to receive a prescription if determined eligible and get the treatment.

Appointments are required at most healthcare locations, so those seeking care are advised to schedule an appointment online or by phone immediately. Those seeking treatment at a [Test to Treat location](#) are advised to call ahead to ensure treatments are still available, as supply of many COVID-19 treatments is limited. Some [Test to Treat sites](#) may have telehealth options available.

Q: How much do COVID-19 treatments cost?

A: Patients should not experience out-of-pocket costs for the medications, but may have fees for the doctor's visit or testing. Currently, COVID-19 therapies including Paxlovid, Molnupiravir, Bebtelovimab, and Evusheld are available under FDA emergency use authorization and are provided by the federal government at no charge to you. Healthcare providers administering COVID-19 treatments may bill insurance providers for the cost of administering the medication. For those without insurance, some of the test-to-treat sites are federally qualified health centers that can provide low-cost COVID testing and treatment services to the uninsured.

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For additional information, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the COVID-19 CareLine at 1-800-720-9616.