

# COVID-19 MEDICATIONS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**There are new, effective tools to take 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**.



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Learn more about Anti-Violence Ventures: [antiviolenceventures.org](https://antiviolenceventures.org)

## 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.

**TEST IT.  
TREAT IT.  
YOU CAN  
BEAT IT.**



## 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.**

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