



## Understanding Paxlovid: Suggested talking points

- **Paxlovid lowers the risk of hospitalization, death, and maybe even long COVID.**
  - Paxlovid [reduces hospitalization and death](#) by 86 percent in unvaccinated, high-risk people and by 58 percent in vaccinated, high-risk people.
  - People who gained immunity from a previous COVID-19 infection also receive added protection from Paxlovid.
  - Paxlovid seems to lower the risk of long COVID as well. A new study shows that people who took Paxlovid shortly after testing positive experienced a [26 percent lower risk](#) of long COVID compared to people who didn't receive the drug. This lower risk applied regardless of people's age, vaccination status, or infection history.
- **There is still a lot unknown about any rebound effect after a COVID-19 infection, but it does not seem to be caused by Paxlovid.**
  - Some people who recover from COVID-19 after taking Paxlovid experience a return of symptoms or test positive again a few days or a week later.
  - There is still a lot unknown about this rebound effect, but data suggests [it is not caused by Paxlovid](#) and can occur among people who didn't take the drug as well.
  - The FDA says rebound is likely part of the natural course of COVID-19 infection for some people and does not lead to worsening symptoms.
- **You may be able to pause your conflicting medications in order to take Paxlovid.**
  - Paxlovid interacts with a number of [common medications](#), but in many of these cases, the drug can still be taken safely.
  - While some medications should not be coadministered with Paxlovid under any circumstance, others can be paused, reduced, or monitored while a patient takes Paxlovid.
  - If you are at high risk for severe disease from COVID-19, pausing a current medication may be worth receiving the benefits of Paxlovid.
  - Consult the [National Institutes of Health's guidance](#) with your health care provider to determine whether you should take Paxlovid in case of COVID-19 infection.
  - Alternative COVID-19 treatments that are authorized include [remdesivir and molnupiravir](#).



## Understanding Paxlovid: Frequently asked questions

### 1. Should I take Paxlovid if I get infected with COVID-19?

Paxlovid is currently authorized for people ages 12 and older who have a current diagnosis of mild to moderate COVID-19 and are at high risk for severe disease. Consult with your doctor to see if you are eligible for Paxlovid in case of COVID-19 infection. It's important to have these conversations ahead of time because Paxlovid needs to be taken as soon as possible—and no later than five days after symptom onset—for it to be effective. Data shows that Paxlovid is 58 to 86 percent effective in preventing hospitalization and death for high-risk individuals, regardless of vaccination status. Data also suggests that Paxlovid could help prevent long COVID.

### 2. How can I access Paxlovid? Is it free?

You need a current diagnosis of mild to moderate COVID-19 and a prescription to access Paxlovid. If you have a health care provider, contact them immediately after you test positive to ask for a prescription. They will assess your risks and current medications to determine if you are eligible for the drug. If you don't have a health care provider, you can visit a [test-to-treat site](#), one of the 2,300 health centers, urgent care clinics, and pharmacies that can prescribe and provide you with Paxlovid. Currently, there is still a government stockpile of Paxlovid, which means it is free for anyone regardless of insurance. Once this stockpile runs out, however, the drug will be covered by insurance or by patients themselves.

### 3. Should I take Paxlovid to prevent long COVID?

There is data that shows that Paxlovid is associated with a lower risk of long COVID, but there isn't enough evidence yet for Paxlovid to be recommended specifically for long COVID. If you want to prevent long COVID, your best bet for now is still to avoid infection. But for people who are eligible for Paxlovid, the drug's potential protection against long COVID should be considered as an added benefit when deciding whether you should take it.