



Treatments to stop a severe COVID-19 infection: Suggested talking points

- **Antiviral treatments can prevent a severe COVID-19 infection and may reduce the risk of long COVID.**
 - If you get sick with COVID-19, your health care provider can prescribe an antiviral medication like [Paxlovid or Lagevrio](#). You need to meet certain criteria to get this medication, and it needs to be started within a week of developing symptoms.
 - You may qualify for either of these antiviral drugs if you're 65 or older; you have a medical condition that puts you at increased risk of severe illness, such as asthma, diabetes, or HIV; you take immunosuppressant medication; or your body mass index (BMI) is 30 or higher.
 - Paxlovid is approved for patients 12 and older who weigh more than 88 pounds, including pregnant patients. Lagevrio is approved for patients 18 and older.
 - Insured and underinsured people can get Paxlovid or Lagevrio for free or at reduced cost through their health insurance, including Medicare and Medicaid.
- **People who are hospitalized with COVID-19, including infants and children, may receive other forms of treatment.**
 - Remdesivir is an antiviral medication [approved for patients](#) who are at least 28 days old and weigh at least 6.6 pounds.
 - This medication is administered through an IV in a hospital and has been shown to prevent a COVID-19 infection from becoming more severe in both adults and children.
 - If you are hospitalized with COVID-19, your health care team may also treat you with antibody therapies to help your immune system fight off infection, such as [monoclonal antibodies](#), which use proteins made in a lab, or [convalescent plasma](#), which uses blood from donors who recovered from COVID-19.
 - Health care providers may also give supplemental oxygen to manage COVID-19-related complications.
- **Whether or not you take medication to help you recover from COVID-19 at home, there are steps you can take to manage symptoms and reduce long COVID risk.**
 - Resting as much as possible may reduce your risk of [developing long COVID](#) and may help you recover from long COVID if you develop lasting symptoms.
 - Taking over-the-counter pain medication can help reduce your fever and manage body aches, and over-the-counter cough suppressants may help reduce coughing and help you sleep.
 - If you start experiencing trouble breathing, chest pain or pressure, confusion, or difficulty staying awake or waking up, go to the hospital right away.



Treatments to stop a severe COVID-19 infection: Frequently asked questions

1. What prescription medications treat COVID-19?

When taken within a week of developing symptoms, antiviral drugs like [Paxlovid or Lagevrio](#) can prevent a severe COVID-19 infection and may reduce the risk of long COVID. Paxlovid is approved for patients 12 and older who weigh more than 88 pounds, including pregnant patients. Lagevrio is approved for patients 18 and older.

Insured and underinsured people can get Paxlovid or Lagevrio for free or at reduced cost through their health insurance, including Medicare and Medicaid.

Those who are hospitalized with COVID-19 and those who are at risk of severe illness but cannot take Paxlovid or Lagevrio—including infants and children—may receive other forms of treatment, like the antiviral drug remdesivir. Remdesivir is administered through an IV in a hospital. Some hospitalized patients may need antibody therapies, such as [monoclonal antibodies](#), which use proteins made in a lab, or [convalescent plasma](#), which uses blood from donors who recovered from COVID-19.

2. Who is eligible for prescription medication to treat COVID-19?

You may qualify for Paxlovid or Lagevrio if you're 65 or older; you have a medical condition that puts you at increased risk of severe illness, such as asthma, diabetes, or HIV; you take immunosuppressant medication; or your body mass index (BMI) is 30 or higher.

Learn more about underlying conditions and other factors that may increase your risk of a severe COVID-19 infection [from the CDC](#).

3. If I have a COVID-19 infection, how can I avoid spreading the virus to others?

If you're sick with COVID-19, stay home. If you share a household, wear a high-quality mask around others and take steps to [improve indoor ventilation](#).

The CDC says you can [resume your normal activities](#) when your symptoms begin to improve and you haven't had a fever without the help of fever-reducing medication for 24 hours. The CDC also recommends wearing a mask around others for the next five days. However, [you may still be contagious](#) after five days, even if you're feeling better.