

# Treatments for Patients at Risk for Severe COVID Illness



## Your risk for getting very sick from COVID

Some people get so sick from COVID that they need hospital care. They can even die. Even if you're vaccinated, you're more likely than others to get very sick from COVID if any of these apply to you:

- You're 50 or older
- You have one or more health issues, such as heart, lung, or kidney disease; being overweight; diabetes; or severe asthma
- You have a compromised or weakened immune system

## Treatments to help prevent severe COVID illness

To help prevent your COVID illness from getting worse, your doctor or health care provider could prescribe you an antiviral medication.

Antivirals work to stop the COVID virus from multiplying and spreading in your body.

An antiviral medication can be pills for you to swallow. It can also be an IV infusion, or drip, in which the medicine is delivered slowly into a vein with a needle.

## Possible side effects from COVID treatments

Some—but not all—people who take antivirals for COVID have temporary side effects. The most common side effects include:

- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Chills
- Dizziness
- Altered sense of taste

## Possible allergic reactions to COVID treatments

Allergic reactions, including severe allergic reactions, can happen during or soon after COVID treatment. Although allergic reactions are not common, tell a health care provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Changes to heart rate
- Rash or hives
- Trouble swallowing
- Swelling of the lips, face, or throat
- Wheezing or shortness of breath
- Sweating

## COVID symptoms that require immediate medical attention

Get emergency medical care (call 911) if you or someone you know has any of the following or has other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent chest pain or pressure
- New confusion
- Trouble waking up or staying awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

## How to manage your COVID illness

- Stay home, away from other people, and rest for at least 5 days. Continue until:
  - You feel better; and
  - You're fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- Drink plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and take acetaminophen or ibuprofen to help relieve fever and aches.
- For a sore throat, you can gargle with warm salt water and use throat lozenges or sore throat spray.
- For congestion or cough, you can use a humidifier or use saline nasal drops or sprays.
- Don't smoke or vape.

## How to prevent spreading COVID to others

- For at least 10 days from your first symptoms, wear a well-fitting mask when you're near other people.
- Stay home for at least 5 days, except to get medical care.
- As much as possible, stay in a separate room in your home, away from other people and pets. Use a separate bathroom if you can.
- Bring as much fresh air into your home as possible. You can do this by opening your windows if it's safe to do so and weather permits. Also, filter the air in your home. You can do this by continuously running your air conditioning system or using portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) cleaners.

**Learn more about authorized or approved treatments for COVID at [cdc.gov/covidtreatment](https://www.cdc.gov/covidtreatment)**

