



COVID-19 ORAL ANTIVIRAL MEDICINE INFORMATION

Unfortunately, many of us will get COVID-19 and it is wise to plan for when that happens. The most important protection is being up to date with your vaccinations.

Two new oral medicines that can be taken at home are available in Australia. They can be prescribed for people with COVID-19 who are considered at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell. This factsheet explains how to make a plan while you are well, what to do if you get COVID-19, and some information about the medicines to treat COVID-19.



Make a plan while you are well

- **Make sure your COVID-19 vaccination is up-to-date.** This is the best way to protect yourself and others, which comes from two preliminary doses, and one or two boosters depending on your age and other risk factors.
- Make a plan with your GP regarding what to do if you become unwell with COVID-19, including who to contact if you get sick and test positive out of clinic hours. Find out whether you are eligible for and would benefit from the new medicines to treat COVID-19.
- Some treatments for COVID-19 may interact with your medicines. With your GP or pharmacist make an up-to-date list of all your medicines including those you buy without a prescription, such as vitamins or supplements, at the supermarket, pharmacy or online. Keep this list updated, and on hand to discuss with your GP or pharmacist if you become unwell with COVID-19.



What should I do if I get COVID-19?

- A PCR test is the best way to detect COVID-19. Get a PCR test at the first sign of symptoms.
- If you get COVID-19, call your usual GP practice (or other arrangements pre-planned with your GP) **immediately** to arrange a telehealth consultation to keep within COVID-19 safety practices. Have your up-to-date medicines list handy, this is particularly important if you are seeing a GP who is not familiar with your health status.
- You may be prescribed a medicine to treat COVID-19. **To work best these medicines must be taken within 5 days of your symptoms starting.**
- A carer or family member can contact your GP on your behalf.
- If prescribed a treatment for COVID-19, the medicines may be delivered to your home by your pharmacy, or a carer or family member can pick them up for you.



What are the treatments for COVID-19?

- Several antiviral medicines effective against COVID-19 are now available. The medicines called nirmatrelvir plus ritonavir (Paxlovid®) and molnupiravir (Lagevrio®) are oral tablets and capsules you take at home over a 5-day course.
- These medicines work by stopping the COVID-19 virus from multiplying in your body. With less virus in your body, your chance of getting very sick is lower. It might also help you to feel less unwell and keep you out of hospital.



Who are the COVID-19 treatments for?

- These medicines are for people who have a higher chance of becoming very sick with COVID-19.
- They are not suitable for everyone. People on certain interacting medicines or of childbearing age may not be able to use these medicines safely. Your GP will check whether these medicines are safe for you.



What do I need to know about these medicines?

- Like all medicines, oral medicines to treat COVID-19 can cause unwanted side effects. These are usually mild and may include diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting, headache or dizziness.
- Ask your GP about the possible side effects and tell your GP straight away if you feel more unwell after taking this medicine.
- Do not share these medicines. They are only for a specific purpose and some people should not take them.
- **You should still isolate from others while taking this medicine, as you can still spread the COVID-19 virus.**



Where do I find out further information?

Talk to your GP or pharmacist or visit:

- Oral treatments for COVID-19 www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19/treatments/oral
- Factsheet: Oral COVID-19 medicines www.nps.org.au/coronavirus/factsheet-oral-covid-19-medicines
- Lagevrio® Consumer Medicines Information (CMI) www.tga.gov.au/sites/default/files/lagevrio-cmi.pdf
- Paxlovid® CMI www.tga.gov.au/sites/default/files/paxlovid-cmi.pdf
- The National Coronavirus Helpline on COVID-19 and vaccines, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 1800 020 080