

Accessibility Collaborative's Antiviral Information May 2022

This Article Covers...

COVID-19 Antiviral Therapy: What is it? Who Should Take Antiviral Treatment? Have a Plan! How to Access Treatment. Helpful Resources.

What is COVID-19 Antiviral Therapy?

Antiviral therapy is medication that is available for higher-risk individuals who have COVID-19. These FREE treatments can help prevent serious illness. There are options available for treatment that include pills that you take by mouth or intravenous (IV) therapy (by injection through your veins). The most common option available for most people are pills that you take by mouth. This medication is called Paxlovid, and it must be taken within 5 days of the start of symptoms.

Some people cannot take Paxlovid as it can interact with other medications. There are other medications available though, such as [Evushield](#) and [Remdesivir](#). **It is very important to speak with a doctor about what options are safe for you!** If you don't have a doctor, click [here](#) to search for community health clinics in your area.

For more information, please refer to the Ontario's COVID-19 treatment site: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-treatments#antiviral-treatments>

Who Should Take Antiviral Treatment?

Some people are at increased risk of serious health complications if they get COVID-19.

You might be at higher risk if you are:

- Immunocompromised (have an immune system that is weakened by a health condition or medications)
- 70 years of age and older
- 60 year of age and older with less than three vaccine doses
- 18 years of age or older with less than three vaccine doses and at least one risk condition.

Risk conditions include:

- diabetes
- obesity
- heart disease
- hypertension
- congestive heart failure
- chronic lung disease (including cystic fibrosis)

- moderate or severe kidney disease
- sickle cell disease
- moderate or severe liver disease

People who have an intellectual or developmental disability, cerebral palsy, or people who are pregnant can also be at higher risk.

Your doctor or another qualified healthcare provider can tell you if you are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19.

Have a Plan!

We recommend having a plan for accessing treatment **before you get sick!** Having a plan in place will help if you are ill as you may be experiencing a range of challenging symptoms. When you're not feeling very well, you may find it difficult to figure things out, and it will not be as quick as when you're healthy. It will waste time and reduce the chances that you will be able to use the medicine. It's like having a fire escape plan that you know well and have practiced before you ever need to use it. It's important to know what your options are before you get sick.

Suggested path to ensure that you will have access to timely treatment

- Contact your doctor now or go to a health clinic to assess which treatment is right for you. You can ask for a prescription during this time.
- If you are feeling unwell, get a rapid test or PCR test right away.
- Go to the pharmacy to fill your prescription or go to an [assessment centre](#) to receive therapy.
- Confirm how often you will need to take the medication.

Anti-viral medications reduce the length of your illness (how long your symptoms last) and your risk of having to go to the hospital.

How to Access Treatment

You can get a prescription from a doctor and pick up pills at the pharmacy. If you are prescribed medication by IV, it will be provided through a clinical assessment centre through a hospital or an outpatient clinical centre. To access any medication, you have to have a test first. It can be a rapid test or a PCR test. **You can access Paxlovid with or [without a health card](#).**

***IMPORTANT**

You can only use Paxlovid if it is within 5 days of getting a positive test.

For Service Providers

Speak with your clients' physicians well in advance to figure out what the best choice is for them, what they need to do next, and where to go when they test positive.

Helpful Resources

COVID-19 Treatments

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-treatments#treatment>

Antiviral Screener

Use Ontario's COVID-19 Antiviral Screener Tool to help determine if you should be assessed for treatment: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-treatment-screener/>

COVID-19 Testing Locations and Clinical Assessment Centres

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/assessment-centre-locations>

Community Health Centres in Ontario (a searchable site)

https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/chc/locations2.aspx#Toronto_central

Ontario Health has detailed information as well as treatment fact sheets.

<https://www.ontariohealth.ca/COVID-19/Health-System-Response-Resources>

Where to Get Vaccinated for COVID-19

<https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-how-to-get-vaccinated/>