

Paxlovid:

What you need to know



→ What is Paxlovid?

Paxlovid is a medicine that treats early-stage COVID-19, which means you must take it within 5 days after symptoms start for it to work. Paxlovid is made by Pfizer, and must be prescribed by a doctor.

→ What is in Paxlovid?

Paxlovid combines 2 medicines:

- **Nirmatrelvir**, which stops the COVID-19 virus from spreading to other cells in your body
- **Ritonavir**, which helps nirmatrelvir work longer by slowing how fast it passes through your body

→ Who can take Paxlovid?

Paxlovid is prescribed to those who have a higher chance of severe COVID-19, such as adults over age 50 or people with underlying health conditions like cancer, diabetes, or obesity. Talk to your doctor to see if Paxlovid is right for you. Your doctor will decide if you should take Paxlovid based on:

- Your chances of getting very sick from COVID-19
- Your medical history, including any underlying conditions
- Other medicines you take
- Whether you're pregnant or breastfeeding



Paxlovid and other medicines

Paxlovid can interact with other medicines and cause serious health problems. If a provider prescribes Paxlovid, make sure to tell them about any prescription medications you are taking.

→ When should Paxlovid be taken?



Paxlovid should be started as soon as possible at the **first sign of symptoms**, within 5 days after symptoms start.



If you are prescribed Paxlovid, the standard dose is 3 pills, 2 times a day, for 5 days. This includes 2 nirmatrelvir pills and 1 ritonavir pill each time.



What are the side effects of Paxlovid?

Most people who take Paxlovid will not have any serious side effects. The most common side effects are diarrhea and a metallic taste in the mouth. Other common side effects include:

- Headache
- Throwing up
- Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)
- High blood pressure



Paxlovid can cause serious side effects for people who are allergic or have liver problems. Stop taking Paxlovid right away and seek medical help if you have:



An allergic reaction, such as:

- Skin rash, hives, blisters, or peeling skin
- Painful sores or ulcers in your mouth, nose, throat, or genital area
- Swelling of your mouth, lips, tongue, or face
- Trouble swallowing or breathing
- Tightness in your throat



Liver problems, such as:

- Loss of appetite
- Yellowing of your skin and the whites of your eyes
- Dark-colored pee
- Pale colored poop
- Itchy skin
- Pain in your stomach area



Learn more:



To learn more about Paxlovid, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/whats-new/antiviral-treatments.html>



Visit our website to find out if you can get a COVID-19 vaccine at no cost through CDC's Bridge Access Program. bit.ly/3QME18B

This material was developed by PANDEMIC (Program to Alleviate National Disparities in Ethnic and Minority Immunizations in the Community) with the support of CDC Cooperative Agreement CDC-RFA-IP21-2113-NU21IP000597: published February 2024. The contents are those of the authors and do not represent official views of, or an endorsement by, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Health and Human Services (HHS), or the U.S Government.

