

18pt

Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Medicines to treat COVID-19

Adapted in 2024 by Accessible Formats Service,
Blind Low Vision NZ, Auckland

TN: The logos on the top of the page are Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand, Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa | New Zealand Government.

Medicines to treat COVID-19

COVID-19 antiviral medicines can help people who are at risk of becoming very sick with COVID-19.

Some people with a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 are eligible for treatment with COVID-19 antiviral medicines. These medicines reduce the amount of virus in your body, so you do not get as sick and you are less likely to go to hospital.

The COVID-19 antiviral medicine is available to treat early COVID-19 at home is ritonavir with nirmatrelvir (branded as Paxlovid).

When taken within the first 5 days of your COVID-19 illness Paxlovid can help you stay out of hospital.

You can get free antiviral medicines if you:

- have COVID-19 and symptoms or you are a Household Contact and have symptoms, and
- became sick within the last 5 days, and;

You must have one or more of these risk factors for becoming very sick from COVID-19:

- have COVID-19 and symptoms or you are a Household Contact and have symptoms, and
- you are a Māori or Pacific person aged 50 or over
- you are aged 65 or over

- you are aged 50 or over, and have not had at least 2 COVID-19 vaccines
- anyone with a severely weakened immune system
- you have Down syndrome
- you have sickle cell disease
- you have previously been in critical or high dependency hospital care from COVID-19
- anyone with 3 or more high-risk medical conditions
- you receive Disability Support Services funded by Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People, or need direct family, whānau or external disability care most days.

Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or hauora provider if you think that you, or a member of your whānau may be eligible for antiviral medicines.

You can get a prescription for antivirals from your doctor or hauora provider. Some pharmacies can supply antivirals without a prescription.

If you are at risk of becoming very unwell with COVID-19 you may be able to get a prescription before you get COVID-19. This means the pharmacist will get the prescription ready to use if you become unwell. You will not be able to get the medicine until you test positive for COVID-19.

Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or Hauora provider to see if getting a prescription before you get unwell is right for you

If you need support

- The COVID-19 disability helpline can provide help or information about vaccines, RATs, managing COVID-19, and any other health concerns you may have. Call 0800 11 12 13 for free. If you are unable to call, you can text 8988.
- You can also call Healthline for free for advice on 0800 611 116.

End of Medicines to treat COVID-19.