



COVID-19 medicines information for consumers

Several different types of medicines have been approved for use in Western Australia to treat COVID-19. Examples include medicines that reduce or stop the virus from multiplying in human cells and medicines that treat the symptoms of COVID-19.

The medicines are best used within 5 days of symptoms starting and are for people who are at high risk of their COVID-19 disease getting worse, and which may require hospital admission.

How can I access medicines to treat COVID-19?

If your GP or specialist doctor determines that a COVID-19 medication will be helpful for you, they can:

- write you a prescription which can be dispensed at a community pharmacy, or
- refer you to your local hospital if your treatment needs to be given by hospital staff.

In some cases, your GP may need to refer you to a specialist to access COVID-19 treatment.

Why can't I get access to medicines to treat COVID-19?

Before a doctor prescribes you this medication, they will check that it is the right medicine to help you and that it is safe for you to use.

Why I am being given this medicine?

You may be prescribed a medicine to treat COVID-19 to help your body overcome the infection and to prevent you from getting seriously ill.

Do I still need to be vaccinated?

Yes, vaccination offers the best protection against COVID-19. Having a COVID-19 infection and being treated does not offer the same protection as vaccination.

What should I know before I use this medicine?

Check with your doctor before using a COVID-19 medicine. Let your doctor know about any:

- medical conditions you have,
- prescribed medicine, non-prescription medicines or complementary medicines (e.g. vitamins, minerals, herbal or naturopathic medicines) you are taking,
- allergies, and
- the possibility of pregnancy or plans for pregnancy.

How is this medicine given?

COVID-19 medicines can come in tablet or capsule form that are taken as a 5-day course and can be taken at home.

Some COVID-19 medicines need to be administered in hospital as an infusion into the vein and it is likely you will need to go to hospital to be given them.

If you're prescribed a course of treatment, your doctor will advise you on how to take your medicine and what to do if you miss a dose.

Consent to use the medicine

A doctor or other healthcare professional will discuss the risks and benefits of using the medicine with you and provide you with a patient medication information sheet.

Using this information, you can decide whether to consent to take the treatment or not. You have the right to change your mind at any time before you start the treatment.

If you are too sick to consent to treatment, are under 18 years of age or have trouble understanding this information, a substitute decision maker can provide consent for you to receive the treatment.

If English is your second language, an interpreter can help you understand the risks and benefits of the treatment.

Timing of medicine use

It's important to seek treatment for your symptoms as soon as possible. Some medicines must be started within 5 days of developing COVID-19 symptoms to be effective.

Things to do

- Remind any doctor, dentist or pharmacist you visit that you have taken this medication.
- Tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you are taking, have recently taken or might take any other medicines before you receive the COVID-19 medicine.
- Seek medical attention if you think you may be having an allergic reaction.
- Speak to your doctor about making a plan for what to do if you test positive for COVID-19.
- Check restrictions for driving or operating machinery while using the prescribed medication.

Things not to do

- Do not stop taking this medicine or change the dosage without checking with your doctor.
- Do not give your medicine to anyone else, even if they have the same condition as you.

Storage considerations

- If you are storing the medicine at home, check if it needs to be stored in a refrigerator and/or protected from heat, light or moisture.
- Keep it where young children cannot reach it.

Side effects

All medicines can have side effects. Most side effects are minor and temporary, however some may require medical attention.

Some medicines can cause allergic reactions which may be severe.

Call your doctor immediately or go straight to the Emergency Department at your nearest hospital if you develop signs and/or symptoms of an allergic reaction including:

- rash, itch, or hives,
- swelling of the face, tongue, lips, eyes, or throat,
- feeling breathless, light-headed or dizzy, or
- feeling unwell.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you notice anything else that may be making you feel unwell.

After you have received medical advice for any side effects you experience, you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine by reporting side effects to the Therapeutic Goods Administration at www.tga.gov.au/reporting-problems .

Breastfeeding and pregnancy

Check with your doctor whether you should receive the medicine if you are pregnant, think you could be pregnant, or intend to become pregnant.

Talk to your doctor if you are breastfeeding or intend to breastfeed before you use a new medicine.

Fertility and contraception

Check with your doctor to see if you need to use an alternative contraception while taking this medicine.

What should I do if my COVID-19 symptoms get worse?

Call your healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns.

Call **000** immediately if you experience severe symptoms of COVID-19, such as:

- difficulty breathing
- severe chest pain
- feelings of disorientation or confusion
- loss of consciousness.

What should I do after I finish my treatment?

Treatment does not shorten your isolation time. You are still considered to be contagious while you are taking your treatment. Follow all Public Health guidelines for isolation. For information about isolation visit www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/quarantine-isolation.

Where can I get more information about COVID-19 Medicines?

Speak to your health practitioner who can provide you with more information or visit healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/COVID19-Treatments.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

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