

PAXLOVID and Evusheld

An Update for the COVID-19 FAQ

Please note: It is strongly recommended that individuals learn about the benefits of getting vaccinated. PAXLOVID and Evusheld are just a types of treatments that can help you recover from COVID-19.

PAXLOVID

What is PAXLOVID?

PAXLOVID is the brand name of an investigational medicine by Pfizer used to treat mild-to-moderate COVID-19 in adults and children who are at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19, including hospitalization or death. Investigational means that this treatment is still under investigation to see if its safe and works to treat people who may need help with getting better from COVID-19. This medicine helps keep people from getting so sick they have to go to the hospital.

PAXLOVID is made up of two medications:

- Nirmatrelvir
- Ritonavir

A doctor prescribes PAXLOVID and you can take it at home.

PAXLOVID was authorized in December 2021 by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). This means that it passed FDA tests to be able to be used.

How does it work?

PAXLOVID is an antiviral pill medication made by Pfizer that is used to treat COVID-19 symptoms. Antiviral medicine is used to help your body fight sickness caused by a virus.

PAXLOVID is a package of two medications that are taken together.

- There are 3 types of pills in a package of PAXLOVID
 - 2 pills are a medicine called nirmatrelvir. This medicine keeps the virus (SARS-CoV-2) from creating more proteins

- 1 pill is a medicine called ritonavir. Ritonavir helps support the other medication by making it last longer so that it can fight your COVID-19 infection
- You need to start taking PAXLOVID within the first 5 days of getting or feeling sick from COVID-19.

Who can take PAXLOVID?

Currently, in order to take PAXLOVID you must:

- Test positive for COVID-19
- Be 12 years and older
- Weigh at least 88 pounds
- Be at high risk of getting very sick or dying from COVID-19

Many people with disabilities, including people with health conditions are at greater risk of getting so sick they need to go to the hospital and sometimes even dying from COVID-19. You should talk to your doctor about PAXLOVID as a possible treatment if you get sick with COVID-19. You may have to advocate for yourself to get them to prescribe it. Also, ask your doctor for assistance with finding a pharmacy who can fill your prescription.

How can I get PAXLOVID?

You will need to talk to your doctor. Your doctor will decide if you are able to take PAXLOVID. Your doctor can write a prescription for PAXLOVID if you can take the medicine. Your pharmacy can fill the prescription if they have PAXLOVID. You may have to go to another pharmacy if they don't have the medicine. You can pick up the prescription and take the pills at home.

What happens when I take PAXLOVID?

When you get PAXLOVID, you should start the first dose as soon as possible.

- You will take 3 pills for each dose--- 3 pills in the morning and 3 pills at night.
- You will take the medicine for 5 days.
- In total, you will take 30 pills

Some people have experienced a "Rebound," of symptoms a few days after they finish their treatment. Some people have also had positive COVID test results during this time period as well. Scientists are studying why this happens. If you do experience this rebound, make sure to tell your doctor and have it reported to Pfizer.

How well does PAXLOVID work?

PAXLOVID's clinical trial showed that PAXLOVID makes you less likely to have to go to the hospital due to severe COVID-19 illness. This study showed that people were 89% less likely to have to go to the hospital and also less likely to die.

What are the side effects of PAXLOVID?

Most reports of side effects say that the side effects are mild.

Possible side effects of PAXLOVID are:

- Allergic Reactions. Allergic reactions can happen in people taking PAXLOVID, even after only 1 dose. Stop taking PAXLOVID and call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms of an allergic reaction:
 - hives
 - trouble swallowing or breathing
 - swelling of the mouth, lips, or face o throat tightness
 - hoarseness
 - skin rash

- Liver Problems. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these signs and symptoms of liver problems: loss of appetite, yellowing of your skin and the whites of eyes (jaundice), dark-colored urine, pale colored stools and itchy skin, stomach area (abdominal) pain.

- Resistance to HIV Medicines. If you have untreated HIV infection, PAXLOVID may lead to some HIV medicines not working as well in the future.

- Other possible side effects include:
 - altered sense of taste which means your mouth may taste different and even bad
 - diarrhea
 - high blood pressure
 - muscle aches

These are not all the possible side effects of PAXLOVID. Not many people have taken PAXLOVID. Serious and unexpected side effects may happen. PAXLOVID is still being studied, so it is possible that all of the risks are not known at this time.

When you talk to your doctor about PAXLOVID, make sure to tell them about all of your medicines and any health concerns.

Your doctor can help you make sure you can take PAXLOVID or find a different treatment.

Sources:

[PAXLOVID™ \(nirmatrelvir tablets; ritonavir tablets\) For Patients \(covid19oralrx-patient.com\)](https://www.covid19oralrx-patient.com)

[Clean EUA-Fact-Sheet-for-Patients,-Parents,-and-Caregivers-COVID-19-Oral-Antiviral.pdf \(covid19oralrx-patient.com\)](https://www.covid19oralrx-patient.com/Clean_EUA-Fact-Sheet-for-Patients,-Parents,-and-Caregivers-COVID-19-Oral-Antiviral.pdf)

Yale Medicine. (2022). “13 Things to Know about PAXLOVID.” <https://www.yalemedicine.org/news/13-things-to-know-PAXLOVID-covid-19#:~:text=PAXLOVID%20is%20an%20antiviral%20therapy,CoV%2D2%20protein%20from%20replicating>.

Hammond, J., Leister-Tebbe, H., Abreu, P., Bao, W., Wisemandle, W., & Baniecki, M. (2022, April 14). Oral Nirmatrelvir for High-Risk, Nonhospitalized Adults with Covid-19. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2022(386), 1397-1408. <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2118542>

Evusheld

What is Evusheld?

Evusheld is a medicine that can help protect certain people from getting COVID-19. Evusheld is given in two shots at the same appointment by a medical professional.

COVID-19 vaccines and boosters are still the best way to protect yourself from COVID-19 and its variants. But there are some people who cannot get vaccines. There are also people that vaccines alone are not enough to protect them.

On December 8, 2021, The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved an Emergency Use Authorization for AstraZeneca’s Evusheld.

How does it Work?

Evusheld uses two different types of medicines:

- The two medicines that make Evusheld use monoclonal antibodies made by scientists in a lab
- Antibodies help your body fight COVID-19
- One of the medicines in Evusheld is called tixagevimab
- The other medicine in Evusheld is called cilgavimab

Evusheld shots can lower your risk of getting COVID-19 or getting very sick from COVID-19 for up to 6 months. The shots may have to be repeated every 6 months to keep you protected against COVID-19.

Who can get Evusheld?

Evusheld is only approved for people who have certain health needs.

To get Evusheld:

- You must be over 12 years old and weigh at least 88 pounds
- You must not currently be infected with COVID-19
- You must not have recently been around others who are infected with COVID-19 or be in quarantine

You also must have one of the following health needs:

- You have a health condition that stops your body from having a strong enough response to the COVID-19 vaccine to fight the virus (example: immunocompromised because you have cancer)

Or

- You're taking medicine that weakens your response to the COVID-19 vaccine (example: chemotherapy or transplant anti-rejection medications)

Or

- You cannot get the vaccine because you have a serious allergy to all of the COVID-19 vaccines or the ingredients in the COVID-19 vaccines

If you fit into one of the groups that are listed above, you should contact your health care provider to ask about getting Evusheld.

What happens when I get Evusheld?

If your health care provider decides that you need to get Evusheld they will give you two shots. Each shot has a different medicine in it. After you get the shots you may have to stay at the Doctors office for up to an hour so that they can make sure you do not have a reaction or other medical issues.

The shots may have to be repeated every 6 months to keep you protected against COVID-19.

How well does it work?

When scientists tested Evusheld for effectiveness, they learned that those who got Evusheld shots had a 77% lower risk of getting COVID-19 than those who did not get Evusheld.

In February 2022, the Emergency Use Authorization for Evusheld was updated in response to the COVID-19 Omicron variant:

- The Omicron variant was easier to catch than the original COVID-19 virus
- The FDA found that they needed to increase the amount of the two medicines in Evusheld so that they could work against the Omicron variant. This means the doses are larger
- Because the doses are larger, you may have to have the shots in a different part of your body that has larger muscles to handle the larger doses

If you have already received Evusheld in its original, smaller dose, contact your health care provider for help deciding if you need to get another dose sooner. Depending on when you had your last dose, you may need another dose of the originally recommended amount, or a dose with the newer, larger amount.

What are the side effects of Evusheld?

Evusheld may cause side effects, but like the vaccines, most of the side effects are mild. Getting very sick with COVID-19 is worse than mild side effects from medicine or vaccines. These are the most common side effects from Evusheld:

- Headache
- Feeling tired
- Cough

Sources

SC DHEC [Evusheld Antibody Treatment for COVID-19 High-risk Groups](#)

Vanderbilt University Medical Center [Antibodies discovered at Vanderbilt for prevention of COVID-19 granted FDA emergency use authorization/](#)

U.S Food and Drug Administration [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Update: FDA Authorizes New Long-Acting Monoclonal Antibodies for Pre-exposure Prevention of COVID-19 in Certain Individuals](#)

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (May 2022) “Frequently asked Questions on the Emergency Use Authorization for Evusheld. <https://www.fda.gov/media/154703/download>

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (February 2022). “FDA Authorizes Revisions to Evusheld Dosing.” <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-authorizes-revisions-evusheld-dosing>