

Treatment for COVID (COVID-19) and Flu (influenza) - Advice for people with disability, their families, carers, or appointed guardians

COVID and Flu are viruses that can affect the nose and throat, and sometimes the lungs. They can both make people very unwell.

Some people with disability who have risk factors, can become very unwell if they get COVID or Flu.

If you have COVID or Flu, there are antiviral medicines available for some people.

Antivirals can help reduce the chance of:

- » becoming very unwell
- » needing to go to hospital
- » death

COVID-19 treatments

There are currently 2 COVID-19 antiviral medicines available in Australia:

1. Nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid™)
2. Molnupiravir (Lagevrio®)

These medicines come in capsules or tablets that you can swallow.

They can be offered to some people who may get very unwell with COVID. These medicines should be started as soon as possible, within 5 days of testing positive to COVID-19.

If they are started early enough, they can help lower the chance of:

- » becoming very unwell, or
- » needing to go to hospital.

Some people may be offered other medicines, including puffers, to help them feel better or to lower their chance of needing to go to hospital.

Have a COVID ready plan

Talk with your usual GP or specialist to see if you should get COVID antivirals or other medicines, if you test positive for COVID.

Having these chats now can help you get the medicines quickly if you test positive for COVID.

If you have any COVID symptoms, you should take a test so that you can get treatment early.

For more information on antiviral medicines, see [Oral treatments for COVID-19 | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](https://www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19/treatments/oral)¹

Getting your COVID vaccination is still the best protection from becoming very unwell with COVID. It is important to stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations. This includes having boosters. You can talk about this with your usual GP or specialist.

¹ <https://www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19/treatments/oral>

Flu treatment and being 'Flu ready'

Antiviral medicine for Flu is usually used to lower the chance of becoming very unwell. It can sometimes be given to people who have been very close to someone with Flu to lower the chance of others getting sick too, if they live in a high risk setting such as a disability residential care facility.

Oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) is a prescription antiviral medicine. These medicines come in capsules or a liquid that you can swallow.

They should be started as soon as possible, usually before you get a result from a Flu test.

Talk with your usual GP or specialist to see if you should get oseltamivir if they think you have Flu.

Talking before you get sick can help you get theto them medicines quickly when you have symptoms of Flu or are around other people who have Flu.

For more information on oseltamivir, see [Tamiflu | healthdirect²](#).

Getting your annual Flu vaccination is still the best protection from becoming very unwell with Flu. You can discuss this with your usual GP or specialist.

² <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/medicines/brand/amt,39602011000036100/tamiflu#eCmi>