

Oral COVID-19 medicines

Oral medicines to treat COVID-19 are now available in Australia. Read this factsheet to learn more about these medicines, who can take them and if they are an option for you.

What are they?

The medicines are called Lagevrio and Paxlovid. They are the first oral medicines that can treat COVID-19. Oral medicines are ones you put in your mouth, like tablets or capsules. This means you can take these medicines at home rather than needing to go to hospital for treatment.

These medicines do not replace the need to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and the health of your loved ones.

How do they work?

Viruses, like the one that causes COVID-19, survive by making copies of themselves inside living cells. This can kill or damage the cells and make you sick.

These are antiviral medicines. They work by stopping viruses in your body from copying. With less copies of the virus in your body, your chance of getting very sick is lower.

Other antiviral medicines help illnesses such as flu and shingles (an infection that causes a painful rash).

Who are they for?

Doctors can prescribe these medicines for people aged 18 years and over with COVID-19 who:

- ▶ do not need extra oxygen to help them breathe, and
- ▶ are not in hospital, and
- ▶ have a higher chance of getting very sick from their COVID-19 infection.

These medicines are not right for everyone. Your doctor will carefully check if they are safe for you. They will look at any other medicines you take and other health conditions you might have.

How can they help?

These medicines may lower the chance of some people with COVID-19 getting very sick and needing to go to hospital. They work best if you start taking them as soon as possible after finding out you have COVID-19. Ideally within five days of first noticing signs of sickness.


Do they cause side effects?


All medicines can cause unwanted effects. These are also called side effects. We are still learning the side effects of these oral COVID-19 medicines. Tell your doctor straight away if you notice any side effects or feel unwell after taking these or any other medicine.

Use these 5 questions to talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider about these medicines for COVID-19

 **Do I really need this treatment?**

 **What happens if I don't do anything?**

 **What are the risks?**

 **What are the costs?**

 **Are there simpler, safer options?**

The oral COVID-19 medicines are:

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Brand name: | Lagevrio | Paxlovid |
| Active ingredient(s): | Molnupiravir | Nirmatrelvir + ritonavir |
| What kind of medicine is this? | Capsules that you swallow | Tablets that you swallow |
| How do I get it? | You need a doctor's prescription. | |
| How do I take this medicine? | Take the medicine exactly as your doctor tells you. ✓ Swallow whole. Drink water to help swallow each tablet or capsule. ✓ Don't chew, break or crush the tablet or capsule. ✓ You can take your medicine before or after a meal. | |
| How long do I need it? | 5 days You may feel better earlier but keep taking it for the full 5 days. | |
| Who should not use it? | This medicine may not be for you if you are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Pregnant ▶ Trying to get pregnant (use contraception for 4 days after last capsule) ▶ Breastfeeding ▶ Sexually active with a partner who can become pregnant (use contraception for 3 months after last capsule) | This medicine may not be for you if you are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Pregnant ▶ Trying to get pregnant (use contraception for 7 days after last tablet) ▶ Breastfeeding ▶ Taking medicines for many other health conditions. Paxlovid can stop other medicines working as they should. Tell your doctor about all the medicines you are taking or have recently taken. This includes medicines, vitamins and natural medicines you can buy without a prescription from your pharmacy or supermarket. |
| What are the possible side effects? | Loose or runny poo (diarrhoea) Feeling like you might throw up (nausea) Dizziness | Changes in taste Loose or runny poo (diarrhoea) Headache Throwing up (vomiting) |
| How much does it cost? | You may need to pay some of the cost of the medicine. Ask the person prescribing the medicine or the pharmacist about how much it will cost you. You may also need to pay for seeing the doctor for the prescription. | |

My medicine

If you and your doctor agree that one of these medicines might be helpful, use this table to keep track.

| | | | |
|---|---------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Medicine name | | | |
| Start | Date: | <input type="checkbox"/> Morning | <input type="checkbox"/> Night |
| Finish | Date: | <input type="checkbox"/> Morning | <input type="checkbox"/> Night |
| If I'm feeling unwell, I should call | Name: _____ | | |
| | Number: _____ | | |

Where do I get more information?

- ▶ [NPS MedicineWise](#)
 - Call the NPS Medicines Line on 1300 633 424
- ▶ [Consumer Medicine Information leaflet for molnupiravir \(Lagevrio\)](#)
- ▶ [Consumer Medicine Information leaflet for nirmatrelvir plus ritonavir \(Paxlovid\)](#)
- ▶ [Oral treatments for COVID-19](#)

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