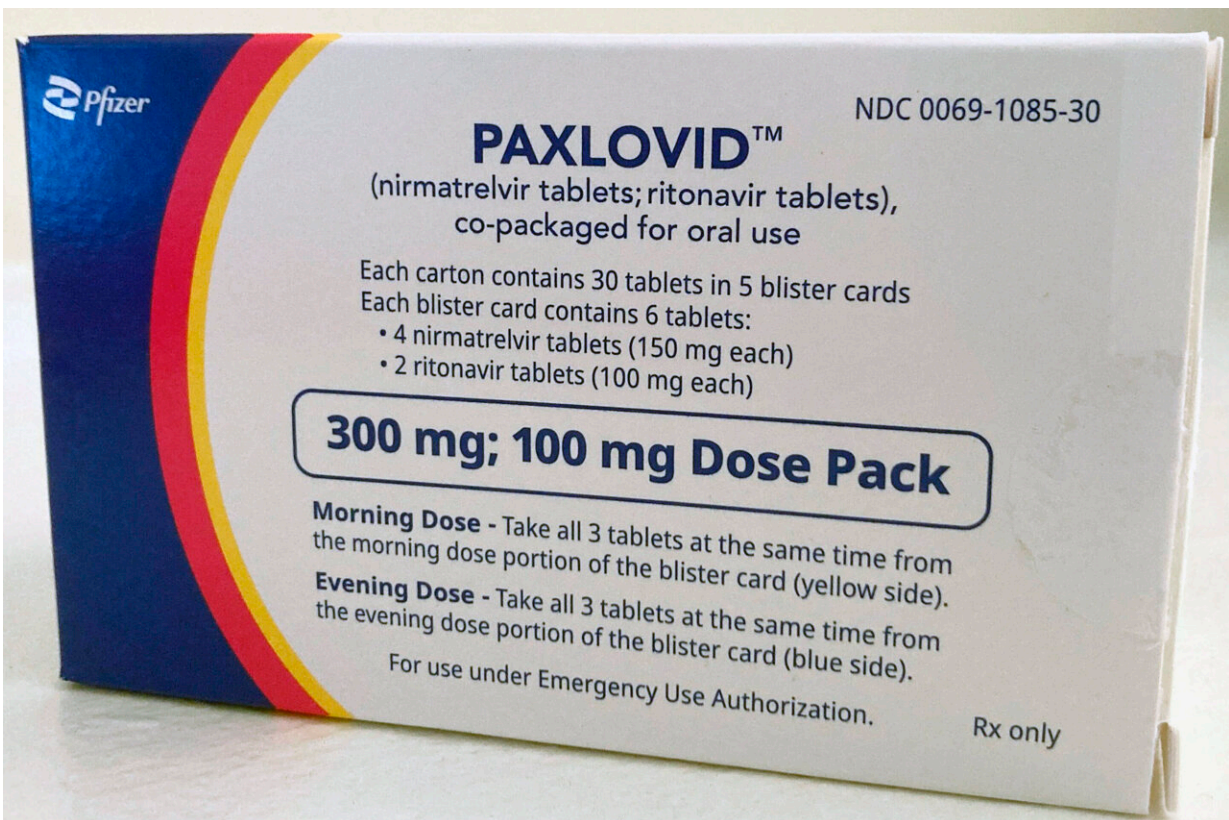


How to get COVID-19 antiviral pills like Paxlovid

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The anti-viral drug Paxlovid is displayed in New York, Aug. 1, 2022. For some people with COVID-19, antiviral pills that can be taken at home can lessen the chances of winding up in the hospital. But the pills have to be taken right away, so you must get tested, obtain a prescription and get the medication within five days of symptoms appearing. The medication is intended for those with mild or moderate COVID-19 who are more likely to become seriously ill. Credit: AP Photo/Stephanie Nano, file

For some people with COVID-19, antiviral pills that can be taken at home can lessen the chances of winding up in the hospital.

But the pills have to be taken right away, so you must get tested, obtain a prescription and get the medication within five days of symptoms appearing.

The [medication](#) is intended for those with mild or moderate COVID-19 who are more likely to become seriously ill—that includes [older people](#) and those with other [health conditions](#) like heart disease, cancer or diabetes.

Here's how to get the pills in the U.S.:

—Take an at-home COVID-19 test and contact your health care provider. If they prescribe the pills, you can get them at your usual pharmacy.

—Use a test-to-treat site, where pharmacists can check if you have COVID-19, write the prescription and give you the pills all in one stop. Find a test-to-treat site at [treatments.hhs.gov](https://www.treatments.hhs.gov).

—Use the National Institutes of Health's Home Test to Treat program, which allows people to get a telehealth appointment and then will ship medications to people who qualify. More information is available at www.test2treat.org.

Paxlovid is the most commonly prescribed antiviral pill for COVID-19. It has a list price around \$1,400, but most people shouldn't have to pay that amount. The drug is free through the end of 2024 for people on federal insurance programs like Medicaid and Medicare. Uninsured people also can get it for free.

However, you must go through a patient assistance program run by Pfizer to get the discount. People on commercial insurance with high out-

of-pocket costs can also get [financial help](#) through a separate co-pay assistance program. Go to paxlovid.iassist.com for more information.

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