

# COVID-19

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Is there a treatment for COVID-19?

COVID-19 treatment is now available for high-risk patients.\* Get tested early for COVID-19 and let your doctor know if you're positive as soon as possible.

- The FDA has authorized a prescription drug (pill) called Paxlovid for treating COVID-19 in some high-risk patients.\* The pill, taken by mouth, works best if started within the first 5 days of symptoms.
- This treatment is available by prescription to some high-risk patients\* and has shown to significantly decrease hospitalization and death. The likelihood of developing a severe COVID-19 infection increases when a person has multiple high-risk factors.

\*High-risk factors include age (risk increases after age 50), cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic kidney disease, chronic lung disease, diabetes, immunocompromising conditions, obesity (body mass index  $\geq 30$ ), pregnancy, and sickle cell disease. For a complete list of risk factors, visit the CDC's Underlying Medical Conditions Associated with High Risk for Severe COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-care/underlyingconditions.html>

### 2. Where can I get the COVID-19 pill?

The COVID-19 medication requires a doctor's prescription. If you're a high-risk patient\* with a positive COVID-19 test, call your doctor immediately. Your doctor will need to check the Department of Human and Health Services' COVID-19 therapeutics locator for availability.

### 3. Where do I get a free COVID-19 test?

You can find a free COVID-19 testing center by:

- Texting your zip code to 438829
- Visiting <https://covid19.lacounty.gov/testing>

You also can order free at-home tests at the following:

- <https://www.covidtests.gov>
- <https://special.usps.com/testkit>

### 4. Where can I get a COVID-19 vaccination and booster dose?

Every Californian 6 months and older is eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine. Boosters have been approved for individuals 5 years and older. Getting vaccinated is safe, effective, and free-of-charge. To find a vaccination site near you, visit <https://myturn.ca.gov>.

You also can call the California COVID-19 Hotline at **(833) 422-4255**, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Saturday - Sunday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

## 5. What is a booster dose?

A booster is an additional dose of vaccine given after the protection provided by the original shot(s) has begun to decrease over time. It is designed to help extend a person's immunity against a particular virus. People ages 5 years and older are eligible for a booster shot (Pfizer is the only vaccine approved for those 5 to 17 years old):

- Five months after full vaccination with the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines
- Two months after the Johnson & Johnson vaccine

For more info: [www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Vaccine-Booster-QA.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Vaccine-Booster-QA.aspx)

## 6. What is a COVID-19 variant?

Viruses are constantly changing and can result in a variant strain. Variants such as delta and omicron are strains of the COVID-19 virus. The delta variant is more transmissible than the original (alpha) virus, and the omicron variant appears to be more contagious than the delta and alpha. However, vaccines can help protect against variants and help prevent severe infections (hospitalizations and death). For more information on COVID-19 variants, visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/docs/about/FAQ-Variants.pdf>

## 7. Do the current COVID-19 vaccines protect against the variants?

Even though it's still possible for fully vaccinated people to get infected with the coronavirus, all three vaccines (Pfizer, Moderna, and J&J) have proven to dramatically reduce the risks of serious illness that can lead to hospitalization or death. The COVID-19 variants can give patients slightly different symptoms. For instance, you may not have a loss of taste or smell, but still develop a cough, shortness of breath, fever, body aches, and many other side effects.

## 8. What side effects are common with the vaccine and how long do they last?

Common side effects are fever, body aches, headache, and fatigue. These symptoms may last up to 48 hours after receiving the vaccine. They can be treated with acetaminophen or ibuprofen. If more severe symptoms occur, contact your primary care provider. There have been reports the second-dose side effects are more pronounced than the first dose.

## 9. Are healthcare workers required to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) requires workers in healthcare, long-term care, in-home direct care settings, and similar types of facilities to be vaccinated and boosted.

## 10. What are the differences between the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines?

Both are mRNA vaccines, which are a new type of vaccine that protects against infectious diseases. Instead of using a weakened or inactivated germ to trigger an immune response, mRNA vaccines teach our cells how to make a protein. Even if our cells create a small piece of the protein, it will trigger an immune response that will help fight certain viruses. To learn more, visit [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/vaccine/index.htm](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/vaccine/index.htm)

**11. Are face masks still required?**

The CDPH recommends the use of face masks to prevent transmission to persons with higher-risk of infection (e.g., people who are unvaccinated or with weakened immune systems), prolonged exposures (e.g., healthcare workers), or to persons whose vaccination status is unknown.

**Many retail pharmacies now offer free N95 masks to help combat the spread of COVID-19.**

**12. If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get a COVID-19 vaccination?**

Yes. Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, you should get the vaccine regardless of whether you already had a COVID-19 infection.

**13. After getting a COVID-19 vaccine, will I test positive for COVID-19 on a viral test?**

No. The vaccines in the United States cannot cause you to test positive on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection. For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/diagnostic-testing.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/diagnostic-testing.html)

**14. What is COVID-19 rebound?**

COVID-19 rebound has been reported to occur in individuals treated with Paxlovid. They have a recurrence of symptoms 2 to 8 days after recovering from COVID-19. Their symptoms are mild and self-limited. An additional course of Paxlovid is not required. However, they can spread COVID to others and need to return to isolation.

**15. Can I get COVID-19 from the antibody test?**

No. A sterile swab is used to detect genetic material from the COVID-19 virus, and nothing is injected into your body.

**16. I tested positive for COVID-19. What should I do?**

Many people recover from a COVID-19 infection after quarantining at home for a couple weeks. Here are steps that you can take to help you get better:

- Drink plenty of fluids and get plenty of rest.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to reduce fever and pain. Please note this medication does not cure the illness or stop you from spreading it, so please continue to wear a mask. Also, children under 2 years should not be given any over-the-counter cold medications without first speaking with a doctor.
- Seek prompt medical care for serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing, can't keep fluids down, dehydration, or confusion, especially if you are at a higher risk of serious illness, over 65, pregnant, or have a chronic condition or a weakened immune system.
- Do not go to work until at least 10 days after initial symptoms and 48 hours of no symptoms without taking medication.