

## What to Know About COVID-19 Treatments

### COVID-19: Overview

COVID-19 is caused by a type of virus called a coronavirus. Exposure can cause an infection that usually starts in the nose, sinuses, and throat. Because this specific coronavirus is new (novel) and we haven't been exposed to it before, COVID-19 is a new disease for humans. COVID-19 spreads mainly by droplets in the air that form when someone who's infected talks, coughs, or sneezes. The virus then infects someone else when the droplets enter their mouth, nose, or eyes.

For most people, COVID-19 causes mild or no symptoms. But for others, COVID-19 can be severe and may even cause death. COVID-19 can also damage many different organs and systems in your body that can lead to complications (additional problems) that can be long lasting.

### How Medicines Are Allowed for Use

Before they can be used, medicines are reviewed by the US Food and Drug Administration (the FDA). The FDA approves a medicine when it has enough benefits to outweigh any known and potential risks. The FDA can also give a medicine an Emergency Use Authorization -- or an EUA -- when it's reasonable to believe it meets certain safety standards and may be effective. The EUA process has been around for over 15 years and has been an important tool in past emergency situations. Certain medicines have been given an EUA to treat COVID-19 because it is a public health emergency and can be serious or life-threatening.



### Medicines to Treat COVID-19

All of these medicines are for people who are 12 and older and weigh at least 40 kg (about 88 pounds).

**Remdesivir** is an antiviral medicine approved for people who are sick enough with COVID-19 to be in the hospital (hospitalized patients). It works by preventing the virus from multiplying, or making more viruses.

**Baricitinib** has an EUA to be used with remdesivir and may benefit certain hospitalized people. Baricitinib blocks certain enzymes in your body and interferes with the mechanisms that cause inflammation.

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**Casirivimab plus imdevimab** (given together as a mixture) and **bamlanivimab plus etesevimab** (given together as a mixture) are monoclonal antibodies that have EUAs. They are for people who are not hospitalized, but have mild to moderate COVID-19 symptoms and are at a high risk for severe symptoms or the need to be hospitalized. They work by tightly binding to specific areas on the virus that causes COVID-19, to stop it from attaching to and entering (infecting) healthy cells.

## Possible Side Effects

All medicines can have side effects. Possible side effects of medicines to treat COVID-19 can include:

- **Remdesivir:** nausea, increased liver enzymes
- **Baricitinib:** serious infections (other than COVID-19), blood clots, changes in lab tests in your blood cell counts or due to how your kidneys and liver are working
- **Casirivimab plus imdevimab** and **bamlanivimab plus etesevimab:** possibly interfere with your body's own ability to fight off a future COVID-19 infection, may reduce your body's immune response to a COVID-19 vaccine

Allergic reaction may also happen with each of these medicines. And for medicines given as an infusion through a vein (IV) -- such as remdesivir, casirivimab plus imdevimab, and bamlanivimab plus etesevimab -- pain or soreness, bleeding or bruising, swelling, and possible infection where the infusion was given may happen.

Not all side effects are listed here. Be sure to check with your doctor for a full list.



## Staying Safe

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, get tested as soon as possible and contact your doctor right away if your test comes back positive. And remember to take the necessary precautions -- including wearing a mask and social distancing -- to stay safe.