

Benefits Of COVID-19 Vaccination and Medication



COVID-19 medications can help treat certain high-risk individuals who are exposed to or infected with the virus. Treating these individuals early can reduce the strain on the healthcare system. Of note, some treatment options might not be effective against certain variants of the virus. Vaccination remains the most important tool to control the pandemic. The vaccines are free, safe, and widely available. All people ages 5 years and older should get vaccinated today. All those ages 12 years and older should get boosted when they are eligible to maximize protection against variants.

	Vaccine	Pre-exposure Prophylaxis	Post-exposure Prophylaxis	Treatment of Mild to Moderate COVID-19
Definition	An injection that is used to stimulate the body's immune response against COVID-19, in an effort to prevent you from getting sick and to reduce severity if you do get sick.	A medication given to someone who has not been exposed and is not currently sick with COVID-19 in an effort to prevent them from getting sick if they are exposed to the virus.	A medication that is taken after you are exposed to a person with COVID-19 but before you get sick, in an effort to prevent you from getting sick.	Medication that you take after you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and have mild to moderate symptoms that do not require hospitalization.
Availability	Widely available	Supply may be limited	Supply may be limited	Supply may be limited
Needs a Prescription	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eligibility	Ages 5 years or older	Ages 12 years or older, weighing at least 40 kg, for certain people who have a weakened immune system or are not recommended to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. They should not be infected with or recently exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.	Ages 12 years or older, weighing at least 40 kg, for certain people who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 and have a high risk of progressing to severe disease. One medication can be used in people of any age.	Eligibility varies depending on the treatment.
How the Medication is Given	Injection	Injection	Injection	Injection or pill
Timing	First dose may be given at any time. Second dose and booster must be given at specific intervals.	May be given every 6 months.	Goal is to give as soon as possible after exposure to COVID-19.	Goal is to give as soon as possible after infection is confirmed. Must be given within a certain number of days after symptom onset.
Long-Term Protection	Yes	May be effective for 6 months.	No	No
Benefits to You	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced risk of COVID-19 infection. Reduced risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19. Reduced risk of long COVID. 	Reduced risk of infection from COVID-19.	Reduced risk of COVID-19 infection immediately following exposure.	Reduced risk of severe illness or death after contracting COVID-19.
Benefits to Your Loved Ones	Protects them from infection by you.	Protects them from infection by you.	Might protect them from infection by you if you do not get sick.	Does not protect them from infection by you.
Benefits to Your Community	Reduces the spread of COVID-19.	Reduces the spread of COVID-19.	Might reduce the spread of COVID-19 if you do not get sick.	Does not reduce the spread of COVID-19.
Safety and Effectiveness	Proven safe and effective after being given to more than 200 million people in the U.S., with emergency use authorization or approval by the FDA. A booster dose gives more protection against variants.	Proven safe and effective in ongoing research studies, with emergency use authorization by the FDA. Might not work against certain variants.	Proven safe and effective in ongoing research studies, with emergency use authorization by the FDA. Might not work against certain variants.	Proven safe and effective in ongoing research studies, with emergency use authorization by the FDA. Might not work against certain variants.

Find your free COVID-19 vaccine at vaccinate.virginia.gov or call **877-VAX-IN-VA** (877-829-4682).