



Australian Government

COVID-19
VACCINATION

Oral treatments for COVID-19, and sexual health

10 March 2022

People who have tested positive to COVID-19 and are at risk of severe illness from the virus are now eligible for new oral treatments.

Two new medications (taken as tablets or capsules) have been approved for use in Australia. They are called LAGEVRIO® (molnupiravir) and PAXLOVID® (nirmatrelvir + ritonavir). These medications must be prescribed by a doctor.

The Australian Government has sent supplies of these medications to health clinics in remote and rural communities.

Oral treatments for COVID-19 may affect your contraception

If you are prescribed an oral treatment for COVID-19 you must take extra care about using contraception.

PAXLOVID may affect how your birth control works. Talk to your healthcare provider about different contraceptives and what is best for you.

Men and women who are taking PAXLOVID should continue to use contraception and afterwards for another 3 months.

If you don't use contraception, and you or your partner become pregnant, there is a serious risk your unborn baby could be stillborn or die, especially if either of you have syphilis.

Practising safe sex during treatment for COVID-19

Practising safe sex is important during and after taking an oral treatment for COVID-19. It is also the best way to avoid pregnancy and to protect you from blood borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections that could harm you and your baby.

PAXLOVID or LAGEVRIO are NOT recommended if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Find out more information about [oral treatments](#).



Practising Safe Sex

Safe sex can mean different things depending on your situation, so if you are considering engaging in sexual activity, there are a broad range of strategies to help prevent sexually transmissible infections such as:

- Increasing your sexual health education (know how to use a condom or other effective barrier methods and make sure you have these available)
- Engage with peer education and your sexual partners (be clear about the reasons you want to use condoms or other barrier methods – your partner needs to respect your decision regarding safe sex)
- When using condoms during vaginal and anal sex, ensure you use a lubricant suitable for condoms.
- Consider using condoms or other barrier methods during oral sex.
- Avoid sexual activity if you or your sexual partner is unwell.
- Sexually transmissible infections like syphilis can often have no symptoms. So, it is important to get tested regularly for blood borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections via your healthcare provider, especially if you are not using contraception.

Birth control pills do not prevent blood borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections therefore an additional form of contraception is recommended for prevention.

If you have any questions, talk to your doctor, community nurse or health worker.

Find out more: [Information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on syphilis \(health.gov.au\)](https://www.health.gov.au/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people-on-syphilis)

Oral treatments are not an alternative to vaccination

Remember, getting vaccinated is the only way to lower your chances of getting very sick or dying from COVID-19.

Being up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations is the best way to protect yourself, your family, and the community against the virus.

If you haven't had all your vaccinations yet, including a booster, have a yarn to your health care worker or find out where you can [book an appointment](#).