

COVID-19 and Treatment Drugs

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What drugs has the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved to treat COVID-19?

A: Currently, there are no drugs or vaccines approved by the FDA to treat patients with COVID-19. However, the FDA recently granted an [Emergency Use Authorization \(EUA\)](#) to allow for remdesivir, hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine to be used only by health care providers for hospitalized patients with COVID-19 when clinical trials are not available or feasible. The authorization does not mean that these drugs are FDA-approved as safe and effective for treating COVID-19, and clinical trials are still needed to determine effectiveness.

Q: What is hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil)?

A: Hydroxychloroquine is a medication available by prescription only that is approved by the FDA to treat lupus and rheumatoid arthritis, as well as to treat or prevent malaria. It is not currently FDA-approved for the treatment of COVID-19. The EUA only authorizes its use by health care providers for hospitalized patients with COVID-19 when clinical trials are not available or feasible.

Q. What is chloroquine (Aralen)?

A: Chloroquine (also known as chloroquine phosphate) is an antimalarial medicine and available by prescription only. It is prescribed for either prevention or treatment of malaria, and certain inflammatory conditions such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. It is not currently FDA-approved for the treatment of COVID-19. The EUA only authorizes its use by health care providers for hospitalized patients with COVID-19 when clinical trials are not available or feasible.

Q: Are hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine effective treatments for COVID-19?

A: Hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine are not FDA-approved for the treatment of COVID-19. Clinical trials are ongoing, but currently there is no published clinical evidence that supports hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine as effective treatments for COVID-19.

Q: I take hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine for my lupus and/or rheumatoid arthritis symptoms. Will I be impacted? How can I get an extended supply of my medication?

A: If you are having trouble filling your prescriptions for your normal course of treatment at your pharmacy, you can contact other pharmacies in your area or pharmacies that offer delivery. Only your doctor can increase the duration and dose of your prescription. The amount you can receive at one time also will depend on the policies of your health insurer.

If you are still having trouble filling your prescriptions, please contact your insurer and/or your health care provider.

Q: Is it safe to take non-pharmaceutical chloroquine to treat COVID-19?

A: No. Chloroquine phosphate, when used without a prescription and supervision of a health care provider, can cause serious health consequences, including death. Chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine should be used only under the supervision of a health care provider as prescribed medications.

Q.: What is remdesivir?

A.: Remdesivir is an investigational antiviral medicine to treat patients in the hospital with COVID-19. Remdesivir is investigational because it is still being studied. There is limited information known about the safety and effectiveness of using remdesivir to treat people in the hospital with COVID-19. Remdesivir was shown in a clinical trial to shorten the time to recovery in some people. There are no medicines approved by the FDA as safe and effective to treat people in the hospital who have COVID-19. Therefore, the FDA has authorized the emergency use of remdesivir for the treatment of COVID-19 under an EUA.

Q: Is the antiviral drug Remdesivir effective for treating COVID-19?

A: Remdesivir has not undergone the same type of review as an FDA-approved or cleared product. Remdesivir was shown in a clinical trial to shorten the time to recovery in some people, but it is still being studied. The EUA for remdesivir is in effect for the duration of the COVID-19 declaration justifying emergency use of these products, unless terminated or revoked (after which the products may no longer be used).

Q.: Where can I get more information about Remdesivir?

A.: For more information, please read the FDA's [Fact Sheet for Patients and Parent/Caregivers: Emergency Use Authorization \(EUA\) of Remdesivir for COVID-19](#).

Q: Is a high dose of Vitamin C an effective treatment for COVID-19?

A: No. There is currently no scientific evidence that high doses of Vitamin C will effectively treat or prevent COVID-19.

Q: How do I get medicine to treat COVID-19?

A: Only your health care provider can determine your treatment. If you have questions about your treatment plan, contact your health care provider. Never take a prescription medicine or drug if it is not prescribed for you by your health care provider for your health condition.

Q: Can antibiotics treat COVID-19?

A: No. COVID-19 is a virus, and antibiotics do not work against viruses as they only work on bacterial infections. Some patients may develop a bacterial infection such as pneumonia. In that case, a health care professional may treat the bacterial infection with an antibiotic.

Q: Is there a vaccine for COVID-19?

A: No, there is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. There are trials underway for a COVID-19 vaccine to ensure safety and effectiveness, but it may be over a year before a vaccine is available to the public.

Q: Products online claim to prevent or treat COVID-19. Where can I report websites selling fraudulent medical products?

A: There are currently no FDA-approved drugs or vaccines for COVID-19. You can report fraudulent websites here: <https://www.fda.gov/safety/report-problem-fda/reporting-unlawful-sales-medical-products-internet>.

Q: Who should I contact with drug-related questions?

A: You can call the FDA's Division of Drug Information at (855) 543-3784 or email druginfo@fda.hhs.gov.

For additional information sources:

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA): <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>