

FACTSHEET

Antiviral treatment and prophylaxis in Residential Aged Care Facilities – Advice for residents and their families

This factsheet is to help residents of residential aged care facilities (RACFs) and their families make decisions about antiviral medications for influenza (flu) and COVID-19.

Influenza and COVID-19 are respiratory viruses that can both cause severe illness. If you are diagnosed with influenza or COVID-19, there are antiviral medications that can help reduce the risk of severe illness. For influenza, this antiviral medication is sometimes indicated for use as prophylaxis – this means to reduce the risk of developing influenza following a potential exposure to influenza.

People aged 50 and over, and those with certain health conditions are at [risk of more severe disease from COVID-19](#) and [influenza](#). [Some of these people](#) may be eligible for antiviral medications that can help prevent hospitalisation and death by reducing the risk of severe illness.

COVID-19

Molnupiravir (Lagevrio®) or nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid™) are prescription medications that can be given to [some people who have tested positive for COVID-19](#) and are at risk of severe disease. These treatments should be given as soon as possible after diagnosis of COVID-19 to achieve the best outcome, ideally within 5 days. If started early enough, they can help reduce the risk of severe disease and may prevent hospitalisation. Monitoring closely for signs and encouraging residents to report their symptoms as soon as possible will help early testing for COVID-19 and allow for timely treatment.

Have a discussion with your usual health care provider about whether you would be suitable to receive a COVID-19 antiviral if you were to test positive for COVID-19. Having these discussions

now can assist with prompt treatment with these medications if you do test positive for COVID-19.

For more information on molnupiravir and nirmatrelvir/ritonavir, see [COVID-19 oral treatments – Information for residents and their families in residential aged care facilities](#).

COVID-19 vaccination is the best protection against developing severe disease from COVID-19. It is important to remain up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations – this includes having your winter (second) booster. If you are unsure, you can discuss with your usual health care provider, or find more information on our [COVID-19 vaccination website](#).

Influenza

Oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) is a prescription medication that can be used in two ways:

1. For people who have influenza, oseltamivir can reduce the risk of severe disease, and may prevent hospitalisation, and even death.
2. During outbreaks in residential care facilities, oseltamivir can be given to people who live in the facility but do not have influenza to reduce the spread of disease.

Have a discussion with your usual health care provider about whether you would be suitable to receive oseltamivir – having these discussions before you are exposed to or develop influenza can help ensure that you can receive the medication promptly if you need it.

For more information on oseltamivir, see [Tamiflu](#).

Annual influenza vaccination is the best protection against developing severe disease from influenza. You can discuss this with your usual health care provider.