

Antivirals:

Medicines that Treat Influenza



Medicines called **antivirals** can help people who are already sick with influenza get better faster and avoid dangerous complications.

Is a flu antiviral different than the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine helps you avoid getting influenza. If you already have influenza, a flu antiviral can help stop you from getting severely sick and suffering dangerous complications. You need a doctor's prescription to take these medicines.

Who should take antivirals?

Those most at risk of complications or severe illness from influenza include:

- Children younger than 2
- Adults over 65
- Pregnant women or recently pregnant women
- People with certain health conditions, including:
 - Asthma, COPD or another chronic lung problem
 - Chronic heart, kidney, liver or blood problems
 - Diabetes
 - Neurologic disorders that cause breathing problems
 - Weak immune systems (due to illness or medication)
- People under 19 who are on long-term aspirin therapy
- Morbidly obese people (with a body-mass index equal to or greater than 40)

People seriously ill or hospitalized with influenza are given antiviral medication.

If you or a family member has flu symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat or body aches and pains) and is at high risk for complications, ask a doctor about antiviral medication.

For more information, visit [nyc.gov](https://www.nyc.gov), and search “**flu antivirals.**”