

Information about the COVID-19 Veklury (Remdesivir) Antiviral Treatment

On April 25th 2022, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the COVID-19 antiviral treatment made by Gilead Sciences, Inc. called Veklury (vek-lur-y), also known as Remdesivir (rem-des-i-vir), for certain pediatric patients. It was previously approved for other age groups.¹

This fact sheet contains information about the Veklury treatment to help you make informed decisions about treatments for COVID-19 that may help reduce your risk of severe illness.

How does Veklury work?

Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid, an inhaled powder, or an intravenous solution) that fight against viruses in your body. Veklury blocks the enzyme that the SARS-CoV-2 virus needs to replicate, meaning that it stops the virus that causes COVID-19.²

Who is Veklury for?

Veklury has been fully approved by the FDA for treating COVID-19 in adults and children³ 28 days and older and who weigh at least 3kg/7lbs who require hospitalization for severe COVID-19 or who have mild to moderate COVID-19 and are at high risk of progression to severe COVID-19.⁴

The risks of receiving Veklury as a pregnant or lactating person are currently unknown and should be discussed with your healthcare provider.⁵ If you have liver or kidney problems, you should speak with your healthcare provider before receiving Veklury. If you are currently taking the medicines chloroquine phosphate or hydroxychloroquine sulfate, you should not take Veklury as these medications prevent Veklury from working.²

How is Veklury given?

Veklury is given through a vein by intravenous (IV) infusion, one time each day for up to 10 days, as determined by your healthcare provider.²

What are the possible benefits of receiving Veklury?

Veklury has been proven to safely and effectively treat patients 28 days and older with COVID-19 by increasing the odds of improvement following treatment and reducing recovery time.⁶

What are the possible side effects of receiving Veklury?

The most common side effects of receiving Veklury include nausea and increased liver enzymes, and allergic reactions.

Side effects of receiving a medicine intravenously include brief pain, bleeding, bruising, soreness, swelling, and possible infection at the injection sites.⁷

Can I be vaccinated for COVID-19 if I am treated with Veklury for COVID-19?

Use of an antiviral drug such as Veklury is unlikely to impair the effectiveness of the protective antibodies provided by vaccines.⁸ Veklury itself does not provide any lasting protection against COVID-19 infection. Therefore, patients who have received Veklury treatment should still get vaccinated as soon as they are able to.

Patients hospitalized for COVID-19 should wait until they have fully recovered before receiving the vaccine.⁸

Should I continue to follow CDC guidelines?

You should continue to practice all safety measures to stop the spread of COVID-19, even if you have received Veklury treatment. This is important because receiving this treatment does not protect you against future COVID-19 infections.

To protect yourself and your community we recommend:

- continuing to wear a mask.
- continuing to social distance.
- continuing to wash your hands.
- following all public health guidelines and recommendations.



Find out more information about specific COVID-19 treatments at uihi.org/projects/covid-19-treatment.

You can also learn more about the clinical trials process these authorized and approved COVID-19 treatments go through to ensure they are safe and effective.

Resources:

1. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: FDA Approves First COVID-19 Treatment for Young Children. FDA. Published April 26, 2022. Accessed May 3, 2022. <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-fda-approves-first-covid-19-treatment-young-children>
2. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Veklury (remdesivir) EUA Fact Sheet for Providers, updated 10/22/2020. FDA. Published October 22, 2020. Accessed September 20, 2021. <https://www.fda.gov/media/137566/download>
3. Eli Lilly and Company. Fact Sheet for Patients, Parents and Caregivers Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) of Baricitinib. Eli Lilly and Company. Published July 2021. Accessed September 15, 2021. <http://pi.lilly.com/eua/baricitinib-eua-factsheet-patient.pdf>
4. Gilead Sciences. Veklury (remdesivir) Prescribing Information. Gilead Sciences. Published April 25, 2022. Accessed May 3, 2022. https://www.gilead.com/-/media/files/pdfs/medicines/covid-19/veklury/veklury_pi.pdf
5. Gilead Sciences. Veklury (remdesivir) Prescribing Information. Gilead Sciences. Published October 2020. Accessed September 20, 2021. https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2020/214787Orig1s000lbl.pdf
6. Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. Combined Cross-Discipline Team Leader, Division Director, and ODE Director Summary Review. Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. Published October 21, 2020. Accessed September 20, 2021. https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/nda/2020/214787Orig1s000Sumr.pdf
7. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Veklury (remdesivir) EUA Fact Sheet for Parents and Caregivers, updated 10/22/2020. FDA. Published October 22, 2020. Accessed September 20, 2021. <https://www.fda.gov/media/137565/download>
8. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC. CDC. Published September 17, 2021. Accessed September 20, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html>