



**Australian Government**

**Department of Health and Aged Care**

**The Hon Anika Wells MP  
Minister for Aged Care  
Minister for Sport**

**Chief Medical Officer**

Dear older Australians,

23 November 2022

### **Oral antiviral treatments for COVID-19**

Older Australians continue to be vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19 and it remains critically important to protect yourself from the devastating impacts of COVID-19.

Fortunately, we have effective medications to help those at the greatest risk of developing severe illness from coronavirus.

You may have already had COVID-19 and taken these medications as tablets or capsules, or you may know friends and loved ones who have done so.

**Oral antiviral treatments are safe, effective and available for all Australians aged 70 or over who test positive for COVID-19, even if they have no symptoms or other risk factors.**

People who are 50 years or older and have two additional risk factors, or who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are 30 years or older with one additional risk factor, are also eligible for the oral antiviral treatments.

### **These treatments are saving lives**

Please, talk to your family and your doctor about your COVID-19 treatment options. This is especially important with the current surge in case numbers and the risk of reinfection.

You will need a prescription for the treatments following a positive COVID-19 test but **planning ahead** and talking to your family and doctor to **give consent** will help to ensure you have rapid access to the medications which must be taken within five days of symptoms starting. The sooner these treatments can commence, the greater their chance of success in reducing severe illness.

These medications are also safe to take again if you have a second or subsequent infection and they are considered appropriate by your doctor.

Finally, **vaccination** remains the best way to protect yourself from severe illness, so we encourage you to stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations and continue to practice simple but critical measures like **good hand hygiene** and **wearing a mask** in crowded indoor spaces.

Our healthcare experts are learning more about COVID-19 every day and **monitoring the latest research** in Australia, and internationally, so we can look forward to a time when COVID-19 is managed like a seasonal cold or flu.

Thank you for ongoing resilience during the pandemic and we wish you all the best for this holiday season.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anika Wells', with a stylized, flowing script.

The Hon Anika Wells MP  
Minister for Aged Care

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'PKelly', with a stylized, flowing script.

Professor Paul Kelly  
Chief Medical Officer