

FAQs on Medications Being Studied for Potential Use in the Treatment of COVID-19



As an essential health care provider, it is important for pharmacists to stay informed about the medications that are being investigated for potential use in the treatment of COVID-19. Know the facts and stay informed with the latest information regarding medications being studied for potential use in the treatment of COVID-19.

Are any medications currently approved to prevent or treat coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?

No medications or vaccines are presently approved to prevent or treat COVID-19. However, multiple medications are under investigation. As of today, potential agents under investigation include currently marketed products such as chloroquine phosphate, hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin, lopinavir/ritonavir, as well as many unapproved investigational drugs, such as remdesivir and others.

Review which medications are currently being studied using the following resources:

- [COVID-19 Treatment: A Review of Early and Emerging Options](#), a summary of evidence by the Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists, published March 23, 2020.
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resources for Pharmacists](#), maintained by IDStewardship.
- [Assessment of Evidence for COVID-19-Related Treatments](#), created by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists.
- [15 on COVID-19 03/23/2020](#), an APhA 15-minute CE activity on hypothesized mechanisms of quinolone antimalarials in the treatment of COVID-19.

Are the medications being investigated to prevent or treat COVID-19 being prescribed by providers or are they being studied in a clinical trial?

Outpatient, off-label prescribing for commercially available products that are under investigation has already begun despite the lack of definitive, evidence-based recommendations. America's pharmacists should understand these potential therapies, manage the increased (and sometimes inappropriate) prescribing of the medications, and continue to serve as medication experts for their patients and healthcare colleagues. In some parts of the country, large community-based investigations have begun to collect data and information on the risks and benefits of these medications for COVID-19. More formal clinical trials are also underway to get more accurate data and information about the use for treatment and prevention of COVID-19.

Is there an easy way to refresh my knowledge about the medications being studied for COVID-19 that are commonly available in community pharmacies?

APhA's *Key Facts About Commercially Available Medications Being Studied for COVID-19* [[Key Facts About Commercially Available Medications Being Studied for COVID-19](#)] provides a high-level overview of FDA-approved indications, contraindications, precautions, and counseling tips.



FAQs on Medications Being Studied for Potential Use in the Treatment of COVID-19 (continued)



Is there official guidance on what I should do if I receive a prescription for a medication being studied for COVID-19?

In order to preserve and manage supply of medications being studied for COVID-19 for patients who take these medicines for existing conditions and to prevent hoarding and stockpiling, states have been taking action to restrict or limit ordering, prescribing and dispensing. Guidance is being issued on a [state-by-state](#) basis, and the entity issuing the guidance varies by state. Pharmacists should check with their state boards of pharmacy, health departments, or other government entities to see whether official guidance has been issued on the use and dispensing of medications currently under investigation for COVID-19.

Currently the following states have issued orders, requirements, or guidance (current as of March 27, 2020):

- [Arkansas](#)
- [Idaho](#)
- [Missouri](#)
- [Nevada](#)
- [New Mexico](#)
- [North Carolina](#)
- [Ohio](#)
- [Oklahoma](#)
- [Texas](#)
- [Wyoming](#)
- [Alabama](#)
- [Arkansas](#)
- [Idaho](#)
- [Iowa](#)
- [Kansas](#)
- [Kentucky](#)
- [Louisiana](#)
- [Minnesota](#)
- [Mississippi](#)
- [Missouri](#)
- [North Carolina](#)
- [New Mexico](#)
- [Nevada](#)
- [Ohio](#)
- [Oklahoma](#)
- [Oregon](#)
- [South Carolina](#)
- [Texas](#)
- [West Virginia](#)
- [Wyoming](#)

If my state has not issued guidance, what should I do if I receive a prescription for a medication being studied for COVID-19?

Pharmacists should use their professional judgment when they receive a prescription for a medication that is being studied for COVID-19. The following steps may be helpful as you review the appropriateness of the prescription:

1. Determine whether there is a valid patient–prescriber relationship.
2. Determine if you have dispensed the medication to this patient in the past on a regular basis.
3. Confirm the diagnosis/indication for the medication (e.g., an FDA indication, COVID-19 treatment, COVID-19 prevention).
4. Assess whether your inventory of the medication will sufficiently cover anticipated refills needed by your existing patients on the medication for FDA-approved indications.
5. Confirm the appropriateness of dose, quantity, and duration of use for the diagnosis. Consider limiting quantity dispensed to reduce the potential for hoarding or inappropriate use.



FAQs on Medications Being Studied for Potential Use in the Treatment of COVID-19 (continued)



How should I approach maintaining inventory for the medications being studied for COVID-19?

It is essential to practice responsible inventory management. Pharmacies should maintain sufficient supply to meet the needs of patients taking medications for indicated conditions (e.g., hydroxychloroquine for rheumatoid arthritis or lupus). Simultaneously, it is important to not overstock these medications, which would cause shortages for others in need. When possible, collaborate with other healthcare providers to optimize the utilization of the available supply of medications to meet patient needs for on-label use and off-label use for COVID-19.

What has APhA done to help ensure the supply of medications being studied for COVID-19?

The increased demand of medications that may have potential use in COVID-19 has resulted in supply disruptions and drug shortages that impact patients with COVID-19 as well as patients who rely on these medications. APhA has taken the following steps to advocate for access to and the appropriate use of medications being studied for COVID-19:

- A [Joint Statement of the American Medical Association, American Pharmacists Association, and American Society of Health-System Pharmacists on Inappropriate Ordering, Prescribing or Dispensing of Medications to Treat COVID-19](#) was released to highlight the important role that physicians, pharmacists and health systems play in being just stewards of health care resources during times of emergency and national disaster.
- The APhA House of Delegates passed policy on [Protecting Pharmaceuticals as a Strategic Asset and Pharmaceutical Safety and Access During Emergencies](#). The policy is used in APhA's advocacy work with government entities.
- APhA and other national pharmacy organizations released [Pharmacy Organization's Joint Policy Recommendations to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), which calls on government entities (e.g., FDA, HHS, FTC) to address shortages and continuity of care.

Disclaimer: Information related to the COVID-19 pandemic is changing rapidly and continuously. The material and information contained in this publication is believed to be current as of the date included on this document. The American Pharmacists Association assumes no responsibility for the accuracy, timeliness, errors or omission contained herein. Links to any sources do not constitute any endorsement of, validity, or warranty of the information contained on any site. The user of these materials should not under any circumstances solely rely on, or act based on this publication. Pharmacy professionals retain the responsibility for using their own professional judgment and practicing in accordance with all rules, regulations, and laws governing the pharmacy practice within their jurisdiction.

