

New COVID Test to Treat Sites Now Open in Contra Costa County

Contra Costa residents can now go to several new test to treat sites around the county to get life-saving prescription medication if they test positive for COVID.

Three new test to treat locations opened last week in Antioch, Brentwood and Pleasant Hill at state sites operated by OptumServe that were previously used only for COVID testing. A state testing site in San Pablo is also expected to begin offering test to treat services by the end of this week.

Patients who go to the sites will take a rapid antigen test and, if positive and symptomatic, they will be connected to a doctor through video. If the doctor deems it medically appropriate, they will prescribe oral antiviral pills (Paxlovid or Molnupiravir).

“These additional test to treat locations, most of which are in areas hardest hit by the pandemic, will provide a big boost to [our efforts to eliminate preventable deaths from COVID](#) in Contra Costa County,” said Anna Roth, Contra Costa County health director. “These new sites will greatly improve access to COVID treatments, especially in less healthy areas of the county.”

In March, President Biden [announced a plan](#) to roll out test to treat sites across the nation. Up until this past week, there have been only three such sites in Contra Costa County – all located at CVS pharmacies (two in Walnut Creek and one in San Ramon).

The oral antiviral medications were approved for emergency use by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) in December. Clinical trials found that Paxlovid reduced a patient’s risk of hospitalization and death by nearly 90%. The medications, which require a prescription from a doctor, are free and available to anyone age 12 or older regardless of vaccination status. To be effective, infected patients must start taking them within five days of when their symptoms began.

As has been [widely reported](#), the oral antiviral medications have been under-utilized since being authorized by the FDA. One reason for that is supplies of the drugs were initially scarce and healthcare providers were unsure whether it was appropriate to prescribe them. But scarcity is no longer an issue, said Dr. Sofe’ Mekuria, deputy health officer for Contra Costa County.

“Supplies of these drugs are plentiful right now,” Dr. Mekuria said. “That’s why [we have been encouraging doctors to more liberally prescribe these medications](#), which are incredibly effective tools in our fight against severe disease from COVID.”

As part of Contra Costa Health’s [Path to Zero initiative](#), Contra Costa Health Plan recently opened its advice nurse line (877-661-6230) to any county resident who tests positive for COVID, regardless of insurance, to improve local access to treatment. Advice nurses screen callers and schedule free telehealth appointments with a provider who can prescribe medication.

For more information about oral antivirals and other treatments, visit our [COVID-19 Treatments page](#). Exact locations for state test-to-treat sites can be found on our [Get Tested page](#).