



# Remdesivir for Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

## Fact Sheet for Patients and Parents/Caregivers

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You are receiving or may receive a medicine called remdesivir for the treatment of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). This fact sheet contains information to help you understand the risks and benefits of taking remdesivir.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) hasn't approved remdesivir for the treatment of COVID-19 yet. Receiving remdesivir may benefit certain people in the hospital with COVID-19. Read this Fact Sheet to learn more about remdesivir. Talk to your healthcare provider if you have questions. It is your choice to receive remdesivir or stop it at any time.

### **What is COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is caused by a virus called a coronavirus. You can get COVID-19 through contact with another person who has the virus. COVID-19 illnesses have ranged from very mild (including some with no reported symptoms) to severe, including illness resulting in death. While information so far suggests that most COVID-19 illness is mild, serious illness can happen and may cause some of your other medical conditions to become worse. Older people and people of all ages with severe, long-lasting (chronic) medical conditions like heart disease, lung disease, and diabetes, for example, seem to be at higher risk of being hospitalized for COVID-19.

### **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

The symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, and shortness of breath, which may appear 2-14 days after exposure. Serious illness including breathing problems can occur and may cause your other medical conditions to become worse.

## **What is remdesivir?**

Remdesivir is an investigational antiviral medicine to treat certain people in the hospital with COVID-19. “Investigational” means that the medicine is still being studied so there is limited information about its safety and effectiveness.

Remdesivir was shown in a clinical trial to shorten the time to recovery in some people. Currently, there are no medicines that have been approved by the FDA as safe and effective to treat people in the hospital who have COVID-19. The FDA has authorized the emergency use of remdesivir for the treatment of COVID-19 under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). For more information on EUA, see the “What is an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)?” section at the end of this Fact Sheet. (page 5).

## **What should I tell my healthcare provider before I receive remdesivir?**

Tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- Have any allergies
- Have kidney or liver problems
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant
- Are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed
- Have any serious illnesses
- Are taking any medicines (prescription, over-the-counter, vitamins, or herbal products)

## **How will I receive remdesivir?**

You will receive remdesivir through a vein (intravenous or IV) one time each day for up to 10 days depending on what your healthcare provider thinks is best for you. Remdesivir may help decrease the amount of COVID-19 virus in your body. This may help you to get better faster.

## **What are the important possible side effects of remdesivir?**

Possible side effects of remdesivir are:

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- **Infusion-related reactions.** Infusion-related reactions have been seen during a remdesivir infusion or around the time remdesivir was given. Signs and symptoms of infusion-related reactions may include: low blood pressure, nausea, vomiting, sweating, and shivering.
- **Increases in levels of liver enzymes.** Increases in levels of liver enzymes have been seen in people who have received remdesivir, which may be a sign of inflammation or damage to cells in the liver. Your healthcare provider will do blood tests to check your liver before you receive remdesivir and daily while receiving remdesivir.
- **Side effects of getting any medicine by vein.** These may include brief pain, bleeding, bruising of the skin, soreness, swelling, and possible infection at the injection site.

These are not all the possible side effects of remdesivir. Not a lot of people have taken remdesivir and the medication is still being studied so it is possible that all of the risks are not known at this time. Serious and unexpected side effects may happen.

### **What other treatment choices are there?**

Like remdesivir, FDA may allow for the emergency use of other medicines to treat people in the hospital with COVID-19. Go to <https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19> for information on the emergency use of other medicines that are not approved by the FDA to treat people in the hospital with COVID-19. Your healthcare provider may talk with you about clinical trials you may be eligible for.

It is your choice to be treated or not with remdesivir. If you decide not to receive it or stop it at any time, this decision will not change your standard medical care.

### **What if I decide not to take remdesivir?**

If you do not take remdesivir, you might get sicker or even die. Even if you receive remdesivir exactly as directed to treat COVID-19, there is still a chance you may get sicker or die.

### **What if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?**

There is limited experience giving remdesivir to pregnant women or breastfeeding mothers. For a mother and unborn baby, the benefit of receiving remdesivir may be greater than the risk from the treatment. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, discuss your options and specific situation with your healthcare provider.

### **How do I report side effects with remdesivir?**

Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any side effect that bothers you or does not go away. Report side effects to FDA MedWatch at <https://www.fda.gov/medwatch> or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

### **Where can I learn more?**

The following websites provide excellent instructions on COVID-19:

- CDC Coronavirus website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>
- State of Michigan Coronavirus website at: <http://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus>
- Red Cross plasma donations from recovered COVID-19 Patients at: <https://tinyurl.com/vyz3vwa>
- Michigan Medicine Patient Education Page at: <http://careguides.med.umich.edu/coronavirus>
- Michigan Medicine Coronavirus Updates page at: <https://www.uofmhealth.org/covid-19-update>

## What is an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)?

The United States FDA has made remdesivir available under an emergency access mechanism called an EUA. The EUA is supported by a Secretary of Health and Human Service (HHS) declaration that circumstances exist to justify the emergency use of drugs and biological products during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Remdesivir has not undergone the same type of review as an FDA-approved or cleared product. FDA may issue an EUA when certain criteria are met, which includes that there are no adequate, approved, available alternatives. The FDA decision is also based on the totality of scientific evidence available showing that it is reasonable to believe that the product meets certain criteria for safety, performance, and labeling and may be effective in the treatment of patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. All of these criteria must be met to allow for the product to be used in the treatment of patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The EUA for remdesivir is in effect for the duration of the COVID-19 declaration justifying emergency use of these products unless terminated or revoked (after which the products may no longer be used).

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