

UW Health: Patience urged as new COVID-19 treatments roll out to public

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MADISON, Wis. – UW Health, like many hospital systems, will be allocated doses of the recently authorized oral therapeutics to treat COVID-19, but like current treatment options, supplies will be extremely limited.

These new pills and two previously authorized antibody treatments, which studies have shown are likely to be effective against the omicron variant, include:

- Sotrovimab, a monoclonal antibody treatment, for patients who have COVID-19.
- Oral antiviral pills (Paxlovid, molnupiravir), for patients who have COVID-19.
- Evusheld, a preventative treatment (prophylaxis) for vaccinated patients with weakened immune systems or those unable to get a COVID-19 vaccine for medical reasons.

Patients looking for more information on the new treatments should visit coronavirus.uwhealth.org. Patients who test positive for COVID-19 may request treatment through a patient [survey](#); those without internet access can call UW Health's dedicated hotline at (608) 720-3319. The hotline is intended for those who are unable to fill out the survey to ensure those who need to use it can get through. Patients who are most risk for severe illness will be selected first and contacted directly. Patients should not call their primary care providers or clinic following up on their survey requests.

Patients interested in Evusheld should contact the provider managing their condition or current prescription that weakens their immune system. The Evusheld

preventative treatment can only be obtained through a physician prescription, and it is not a substitute for vaccination.

While the new treatments represent a positive step forward, supplies made available at this time, particularly the antiviral pills, are extremely limited, according to Dr. Bartho Caponi, hospitalist, UW Health, and clinical professor of medicine, UW School of Medicine and Public Health.

“It’s wonderful to have these new treatments that appear to work against the omicron variant, especially a treatment that doesn’t require an infusion, but the small supply means that only the most vulnerable individuals can get them while supplies are so limited,” he said.

In December 2021, the Food and Drug Administration authorized the use of the first two oral antiviral pills, Pfizer’s Paxlovid and Merck’s molnupiravir, to treat a COVID-19 infection, and Wednesday the state Department of Health Services announced the new pills will be allocated to hospitals and pharmacies throughout the state starting this week.

On Wednesday, UW Health received equal numbers of both pills to treat a total of 40 patients. UW Health previously received doses of GlaskoSmithKline’s sotrovimab, which was authorized by the FDA in May 2021, and AstraZeneca’s Evusheld that was authorized in early December 2021.

Caponi will be available for interviews today.