

# How do antivirals treat and protect against influenza?

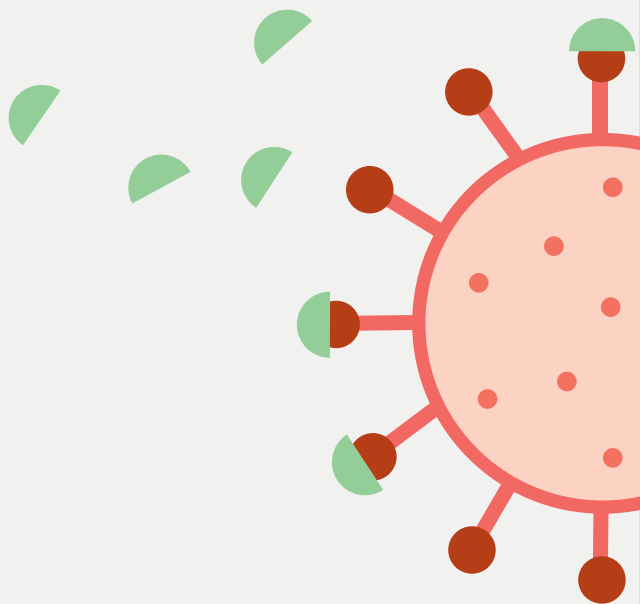
Oseltamivir comes as a pill; zanamivir as an inhaler. Both antivirals contain neuraminidase inhibitors and are proven to be very safe.



These medicines can be used to:

- treat confirmed influenza patients
- protect people exposed to influenza patients

Neuraminidase inhibitors attach to the virus and block its neuraminidase enzyme. With this enzyme blocked, the virus can no longer break through cell membranes.



These antivirals benefit both vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals if they fall ill with influenza.

Time is of the essence. The sooner antivirals are given, the more effective it is to treat and protect against influenza.



Read more in this ECDC Expert Opinion:

<https://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/expert-opinion-neuraminidase-inhibitors-prevention-and-treatment-influenza-review>