

Fact Sheet: COVID-19 Antivirals (Paxlovid) for Long-Term Care (LTC) Residents, Caregivers and Families

OVERVIEW

1. What is Paxlovid?

Paxlovid is an oral antiviral medication, manufactured by Pfizer, which was approved by Health Canada on January 17, 2022. It comes in tablet form and is a combination of two drugs Nirmatrelvir and Ritonavir. A full course is up to three tablets twice daily for five days in a row, although a reduced dosage may be recommended for certain patient populations.

The drug may be considered for individuals at higher risk of severe COVID-19 within the first 5 days of symptom onset, when a diagnosis has been confirmed by a positive rapid antigen test, PCR, or rapid molecular test, and based on the recommendation of a health care provider.

Other treatments may be available or recommended by a health care provider depending on the patient.

Eligibility

2. Who is Eligible to Receive Paxlovid?

LTC home residents are considered higher risk and priority populations for access to Paxlovid and other therapeutics if they meet the following criteria:

- Over 18 years old and immunocompromised (have an immune system that is weakened by a health condition or medications);
- 70 years of age and older;
- 60 years of age and older with less than three vaccine doses;
- 18 years of age or older with less than three vaccine doses and at least one risk condition

Risk conditions include:

- diabetes
- obesity
- heart disease
- hypertension
- congestive heart failure
- chronic respiratory disease (including cystic fibrosis)
- moderate or severe kidney disease
- intellectual or developmental disability
- cerebral palsy
- sickle cell disease
- moderate or severe liver disease
- pregnant and unvaccinated (zero doses)

3. Are there any other eligibility considerations?

Paxlovid is not right for everyone. Anytime more than one medication is taken, whether an over-the-counter medication or prescribed by a physician, there is the risk of drug interactions. Drug interactions may have serious outcomes – your healthcare provider will consider any potential drug interactions when assessing for eligibility.

In addition, Paxlovid cannot be crushed and must be administered whole, which may limit administration to LTC residents that have difficulty swallowing.

Residents will have all of their medications considered including any natural health products and vitamins that are currently listed on their medication profile.

Other treatments may be available or recommended by a health care provider depending on the patient.

4. Who decides eligibility?

A physician or nurse practitioner must determine whether Paxlovid is right for an individual, including for individuals who do not belong to one of the eligible groups, based on their individual circumstances.

Availability

5. Where will Paxlovid be available?

For eligible LTC residents that have been prescribed Paxlovid, this medication will be provided as part of the regular process in their LTC home (i.e., monitored medication system).

Staff, caregivers and family members may get assessed and access Paxlovid through a [clinical assessment centre](#). Those who have been prescribed Paxlovid, may also access Paxlovid at [participating pharmacies](#).

Other medications may have different processes in place. Talk to your health care provider.

Resources

More information on COVID-19 antiviral treatments, who is eligible and how to get treatment is available in this Ontario Health [Fact Sheet](#) and on the Government of Ontario [website](#).