



Memo

Date:

December 8, 2022

To: Health care providers

From: Dr. Chris Simpson, Executive Vice President, Medical

CC: Brian Ktytor, Chief Regional Officer, North East and North West
Anna Greenberg, Chief Regional Officer, Toronto and East
Susan deRyk, Chief Regional Officer, Central and West
Mark Walton, Senior Vice President, COVID-19 Pandemic Response

Re: Recommendation on the use of Paxlovid

Paxlovid (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) is an antiviral treatment used to prevent severe COVID-19 in people who are at higher risk. This memo is intended to inform health care providers about Ontario Health's recommendation on the use of Paxlovid in Ontario.

Background

To date in Ontario, the question of which individuals should be considered for treatment with Paxlovid has been supported by guidelines from the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table as well as criteria from the Ministry of Health. There is a need to reassess the recommendation on who may benefit from Paxlovid to consider current vaccine status in Ontario as well as evidence published since the Science Table guidelines were last updated in April 2022.

In fall 2022, Ontario Health established a COVID-19 Therapeutics Interim Working Group to provide guidance and advice to Ontario Health and the Ministry of Health on priority issues regarding the appropriate use of therapeutics for COVID-19 infection. The COVID-19 Therapeutics Interim Working Group has developed the following recommendation on use of Paxlovid based on best available evidence and expert consensus.

Recommendation

Paxlovid should be strongly considered for individuals who have a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis (based on positive PCR, rapid molecular, or rapid antigen test result), present within 5 days of symptom onset, and meet one or more of the following criteria:

- The individual is 60 years of age or older;
 - The individual is 18 years of age or older and is immunocompromised;
 - The individual is 18–59 years old and is at higher risk of severe COVID-19. Patients at higher risk of severe COVID-19 include:
 - Those who have one or more [comorbidity](#) that puts them at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease
- OR
- Those with inadequate immunity, i.e.:
 - Unvaccinated or incomplete primary series OR
 - Completed primary series AND last COVID-19 vaccine dose was more than 6 months ago AND last SARS-CoV-2 infection was more than 6 months ago

Social determinants of health may confer an increased risk of disease progression. Individuals who are at a higher risk of poor outcomes from COVID-19 infection based on social determinants of health should be considered priority populations for access to Paxlovid. Individuals at higher risk include Indigenous people, Black people, other members of racialized communities, individuals with intellectual, developmental, or cognitive disability, people who use substances regularly (e.g., alcohol), people who live with mental health conditions, and people who are underhoused.

Note: Combinations of risk factors are associated with higher risk of severe COVID-19.

Review Ontario Health’s full [recommendation on the use of Paxlovid](#) for additional detail, including information about the COVID-19 Therapeutics Interim Working Group and how this recommendation was developed.

Actions for health care providers

Health care providers are asked to review the recommendation on the use of Paxlovid and the resources below. Changes may be necessary to workflows to consider administration of Paxlovid for these patient groups. As always, health care providers must determine whether adopting suggested information is clinically appropriate for individual patients through a risk-benefit assessment.

Resources

- [Ontario Health Recommendation on the Use of Nirmatrelvir/Ritonavir \(Paxlovid\)](#)
- [Ontario Health Guidance for Health Care Providers: Access to COVID-19 antiviral treatment \(Paxlovid\)](#)
- [“Make a Plan” toolkit](#) of patient-facing resources to support access to Paxlovid, including posters, flyers, social media posts, and postcards that can be customized to local context
- [Nirmatrelvir/Ritonavir \(Paxlovid™\): What Prescribers and Pharmacists Need to Know](#) (this document will be updated in the coming days at the same link)
- [Nirmatrelvir/Ritonavir \(Paxlovid\) and Remdesivir Use in Patients on Dialysis with COVID-19: Quick Reference Guide](#)

Questions may be directed to the Ontario Health regional contacts listed below. Thank you for your attention to this information and for your ongoing dedication to providing the best possible care for your patients.

Ontario Health regional contacts

Central	Mira Backo-Shannon (Mira.Backo-Shannon@ontariohealth.ca) David Pearson (David.Pearson@ontariohealth.ca)
East	Farrah Hirji (Farrah.Hirji@ontariohealth.ca) Lesley Ng (Lesley.Ng@ontariohealth.ca)
Toronto	TOTherapeutics@ontariohealth.ca
West	Karen M. Bell (Karen.M.Bell@ontariohealth.ca) Jennifer Mills Beaton (Jennifer.MillsBeaton@ontariohealth.ca) Heather Byrnell (Heather.Byrnell@ontariohealth.ca) Tammy Meads (Tammy.Meads@ontariohealth.ca)
North East and North West	Jennifer MacKinnon (Jennifer.MacKinnon@ontariohealth.ca) Robert Barnett (Robert.Barnett@ontariohealth.ca)