

Nirmatrelvir/Ritonavir (Paxlovid) Guidance for Health Professionals

June 10, 2024

Since 2022, nirmatrelvir/ritonavir has been supplied by the federal government as a temporary, extraordinary measure at no cost to patients who met established criteria in Newfoundland and Labrador. The remaining federal supply of nirmatrelvir/ritonavir expired on May 31, 2024.

Nirmatrelvir/ritonavir is now commercially available and pharmacies can order and dispense through their usual processes for prescription medications. The approximate cost for a 5-day treatment course of nirmatrelvir/ritonavir is \$1,450. The out-of-pocket cost to patients will depend on their drug coverage. To avoid delays in starting nirmatrelvir/ritonavir, high-risk patients should consult their prescribers to develop a treatment plan in advance of potential COVID-19 infection that includes a proactive assessment of drug coverage through their insurance and/or the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program (NLPDP) as applicable.

Pharmacists in Newfoundland and Labrador can continue to prescribe medications for the treatment and prevention of COVID-19 within their scope of practice for any individual. As a result, pharmacists who meet the requirements of the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board to prescribe, can do so on behalf of patients. Physicians and nurse practitioners may also prescribe nirmatrelvir/ritonavir for their patients as required. NLPDP coverage will only apply to active NLPDP beneficiaries (see section below).

Individuals with NLPDP coverage:

Nirmatrelvir/ritonavir is now a benefit of the NLPDP for eligible beneficiaries with the following updated criteria:

Treatment with nirmatrelvir-ritonavir should be initiated as soon as possible after a diagnosis of COVID-19 has been made, and within 5 days of symptom onset in adult patients who have either of the following:

Severe immunosuppression, such as:

- *recipient of solid organ transplant*
- *treatment for a malignant hematologic condition*
- *bone marrow, stem cell transplant, or transplant-related immunosuppressant use*
- *receipt of an anti-CD20 drugs or B-cell depleting drugs (such as rituximab) in the past 2 years*
- *Severe primary immunodeficiencies*

Moderate immunosuppression, such as:

- *treatment for cancer, including solid tumors*
- *treatment with significantly immunosuppressing drugs (e.g., a biologic in the past 3 months, oral immune-suppressing medication in the past month, oral steroid [20 mg/day of prednisone equivalent taken on an ongoing basis] in the past month, or immune-suppressing infusion or injection in the past 3 months).*
- *advanced HIV infection (treated or untreated)*
- *moderate primary immunodeficiencies*
- *renal conditions (i.e., hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, glomerulonephritis and dispensing of a steroid)*

Clinical notes:

- *Treatment should not be offered to patients who are taking a medication that may result in a serious drug interaction with nirmatrelvir/ritonavir.*
- *Treatment should not be offered to patients who have a medical condition that would make treatment with nirmatrelvir/ritonavir inappropriate.*

The Screening and Prescribing Form has been updated and will continue to serve as the official prescription for Paxlovid for NLPDP beneficiaries. This can be sent to a pharmacy of the individual's choice for the purposes of dispensing. During dispensing, the pharmacy will coordinate with the patient for delivery or contactless pickup. It is important to note that for a pharmacist to dispense and claim NLPDP for Paxlovid written by a physician or nurse practitioner, the Screening and Prescribing form must be completed in full, and the individual must be an active NLPDP beneficiary. The updated Screening and Prescribing form can be found at:

[NLPDP Paxlovid Assessment and Prescribing Form](#)

Rapid tests for the purposes of confirming COVID-19 diagnosis for NLPDP beneficiaries can be accessed at most pharmacies in the province, free of charge, provided all of the following apply:

- The test is for the purpose of confirming Paxlovid eligibility
- The individual is a NLPDP beneficiary
- The individual is 18 years of age or older
- The individual has mild symptoms that started within the last 5 days

NLPDP beneficiaries who began experiencing COVID-19 symptoms within the previous 5 days, may receive two rapid tests from their pharmacy, free of charge, for the purposes of confirming the diagnosis.

Individuals with Private insurance:

Patients with private insurance may be able to obtain full or partial coverage of nirmatrelvir/ritonavir depending on their plan and should confirm with their plan directly.

The Drug Identification Numbers (DIN) for nirmatrelvir/ritonavir products in Canada are:

- nirmatrelvir 150 mg and ritonavir 100 mg dose packs (DIN 02524031)
- nirmatrelvir 300 mg and ritonavir 100 mg dose packs (DIN 02527804)

Individuals with NO drug coverage:

Individuals who are not beneficiaries of the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program or do not have private insurance, will have to pay out of pocket for Paxlovid.

For Individuals who wish to determine whether they may be eligible for a NLPDP drug card, information regarding NLPDP drug card eligibility, including application forms, can be found at: [Plan Overview - Health and Community Services \(gov.nl.ca\)](#)

If you have any further questions regarding Paxlovid, please do not hesitate to call 1-709-729-6507 or 1-888-222-0533.