

## **COVID-19 Oral Antiviral Paxlovid™—update for pharmacies**

### **Federal supply**

The federal government is no longer providing free supply of Paxlovid™ to provinces and territories.

Any remaining stock of federal supply will expire **May 26, 2024**, and should be disposed of following normal medication disposal procedures. This expired stock should not be returned to the distributor or manufacturer.

### **New reimbursement structure for Paxlovid™**

Effective May 24, 2024, Paxlovid™ will be listed on the *Alberta Drug Benefit List (ADBL)*. All Alberta pharmacies will continue to be eligible to dispense Paxlovid™.

Coverage of Paxlovid™ will be restricted to members of a government-sponsored drug program, via Restricted Benefit/Special Authorization, who meet the following criteria:

“Mild-to-moderate coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in adults with positive results of direct severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) viral testing, and who are at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19, including hospitalization or death in patients who are considered to be moderately to severely immunosuppressed and are receiving drug therapy for associated indications.”\*

\*Please refer to the online [interactive Alberta Drug Benefit List](#) to review the comprehensive Restricted Benefit/Special Authorization coverage criteria.

Albertans who are members of a government-sponsored drug program and meet the eligibility criteria can call Health Link at 1-844-343-0971. Health Link staff will ask screening questions and refer Albertans to a health professional, who will confirm eligibility and arrange next steps for getting the most appropriate COVID-19 treatment for them.

**Note:** Albertans who require access to Paxlovid™ and do not have government-sponsored drug coverage are encouraged to speak to their private insurance plan administrator to determine if this therapy is funded under their policy.

Paxlovid™ has been added as a benefit Alberta Blue Cross group and Individual Product plans where eligible.

### **Long-term care or designated supportive living facilities**

Albertans living in long-term care or designated supportive living facilities, who are members of a government-sponsored drug program and meet the established eligibility criteria, will continue to have access to Paxlovid™. However, please note, all claims for Paxlovid™ are now subject to the applicable reimbursement structure for government-sponsored drug programs.

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### Claims adjudication

The Restricted Benefit listing status of Paxlovid™ provides coverage without members requiring special authorization when the Alberta Blue Cross PRIDE® claim adjudication system identifies that a member has claimed for therapies used to treat conditions associated with immunosuppression. In cases where prior history of these medications is not available, the claim may be rejected with the following response codes:

**EG**—No Record of First Line Therapy

**CP**—Eligible for Special Authorization

### Intervention code

When the pharmacy provider has supporting documentation of the patient meeting the above-noted criteria, coverage may be provided if the following intervention code is used:

**NB**—valid claim—validation on file

**Note:** Special Authorization continues to be available for Paxlovid™ if the Restricted Benefit pathway is not appropriate. Given the time sensitive nature of Paxlovid, Alberta Blue Cross will endeavor to assess Special Authorization requests in an urgent manner.

### Ordering Paxlovid™

Alberta Health has heard reports that pharmacies are experiencing delays in receiving their Paxlovid™ orders and wholesalers are implementing a minimum order requirement. Alberta Health has discussed these concerns with McKesson and has been assured there is no minimum quantity required to order this medication, and delivery can occur within one day from when a pharmacy submits its order.

### PAXLOVID™ PRODUCT INFORMATION

The product monograph has been posted on the Health Canada website at [covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/paxlovid-en.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/covid-19/vaccines/paxlovid-en.html).

- Paxlovid™ is a combination of 2 antiviral drugs— nirmatrelvir and ritonavir—for early treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19.
- DIN 02524031 consists of 2 sets of tablets (total of 3 tablets per dose) taken orally, twice a day for 5 days. DIN 02527804 consists of 2 sets of tablets (total of 2 tablets per dose for individuals with moderate renal impairment with an eGFR of 30 to 59 mL/min) taken orally, twice a day for 5 days.
- Treatment must start within 5 days of symptoms appearing as Paxlovid™ has been shown to be most effective when administered in the early phases of infection and viral replication, while symptoms remain mild to moderate.

Paxlovid™ has many drug interactions and medical contraindications that pharmacists must be aware of. Pharmacists must assess each Paxlovid™ prescription against these drug interactions and medical contraindications. Please refer to the Paxlovid™ product monograph for more information on these drug interactions.

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### Important Links

- Interactive Alberta Drug Benefit List: <https://idbl.ab.bluecross.ca/idbl/load.do>
- Paxlovid Product Monograph: [covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/paxlovid-en.html](https://www.covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/paxlovid-en.html)

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For assistance with benefit or claim inquiries, please contact an Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Services Provider Relations contact centre representative at

**780-498-8370** (Edmonton and area)

**403-294-4041** (Calgary and area)

**1-800-361-9632** (toll free)

**FAX 780-498-8406** (Edmonton and area)

**FAX 1-877-305-9911** (toll free)

Alberta Blue Cross offers online access to current Pharmacy Benefacts and supplemental claiming information to assist with the submission of your direct bill drug claims.

Visit [ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php](https://ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php)

