FAQ

PAXLOVID Eligibility and Access

What is PAXLOVID?

- **An oral medication for mild-to-moderate COVID-19 in adults that are at high risk for severe health outcomes.**[1]
- PAXLOVID contains two drugs (Nirmatrelvir & Ritonavir) which helps your body recover faster.[1]
- PAXLOVID must be taken within 5 days of your first COVID-19 symptom onset.[1]
- PAXLOVID is prescribed by your healthcare provider and can be taken at home.[1]
- In most provinces, PAXLOVID can be prescribed by your pharmacist – contact your local pharmacy for more details.[15]
- PAXLVOID can interact with other medications you may be taking which can make you ineligible for PAXLOVID treatment. It is important to check with your healthcare provider if this applies to you.[1]

Is PAXLOVID right for me?

- While recommendations may vary by province, in general your healthcare provider may suggest PAXLOVID if you are at higher risk of more severe COVID-19 outcomes based on:
  - **Immunocompromised status** - people who have a weakened immune system caused by health conditions, drug treatments, infections, organ transplant and genetic conditions.[2]
  - **Age** - 65 years and older, with no other risk factors.[2]
  - **COVID-19 vaccination status** - people who have not received the COVID-19 vaccine are at higher risk for severe health outcomes.[2]
  - **Having multiple medical conditions** such as chronic kidney, liver, or lung disease or heart conditions.[2]
- You may need to stop your current medications and/or treatments to begin taking PAXLOVID.[16]

Talk to your healthcare provider to find out if PAXLOVID is right for you.

Who is eligible for PAXLOVID?

- **British Columbia[6]:** Immunocompromised And/Or 60+ With Risk Factors
- **Alberta[4]:** Immunocompromised
- **Saskatchewan[7]:** Immunocompromised
- **Manitoba[8]:** Immunocompromised
- **Ontario[5]:** 65+ or Immunocompromised
- **Quebec[9]:** 60+ or Immunocompromised Or Having One Co-Morbidity.
- **New Brunswick[10]:** Immunocompromised
- **Nova Scotia[11]:** Immunocompromised
- **Newfoundland[12]:** Immunocompromised
- **PEI[13]:** Immunocompromised
- **Yukon[14]:** Immunocompromised
- **Northwest Territories[17]:** Must be assessed by a HCP for your risk level
- **Nunavut[18]:** Immunocompromised or having multiple risk factors

How can I access PAXLOVID?

If you are eligible in your province...

- You must test positive for COVID-19 on either a rapid antigen (at-home) test or a PCR test.
- Contact your healthcare provider or local pharmacist. If they determine that Paxlovid is appropriate, it will be prescribed to you.
- Pick up your prescription from your pharmacy. In some cases, pharmacies can deliver medications. Contact your local pharmacy for more information.
- Note: PAXLOVID treatment must occur within 5 days of your first COVID-19 symptoms.
- Some provinces offer PAXLOVID free of charge. For more information, contact your local pharmacy.

Common PAXLOVID Myths and Facts

- **Myth: PAXLOVID has a lot of side effects.**
  - **Fact:** Although some people will experience different side effects, the most common one is an unpleasant taste in the mouth. Contact your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that do not go away.[3]

- **Myth: PAXLOVID can replace COVID-19 vaccines.**
  - **Fact:** Staying up-to-date with your COVID-19 vaccines is the best protection against infection.

- **Myth: PAXLOVID can be used to prevent COVID-19 infections.**
  - **Fact:** PAXLOVID is given to people who have already tested positive for COVID-19. This treatment prevents severe health outcomes, but does not prevent COVID-19 infections. You must test positive for COVID-19 to take PAXLOVID.

- **Myth: You can take PAXLOVID at any point after the onset of COVID-19 symptoms.**
  - **Fact:** This treatment must be taken within the first five days of having symptoms of COVID-19.[3]

- **Myth: PAXLOVID is a long-term medication.**
  - **Fact:** PAXLOVID should not be used for more than five days in a row.

- **Myth: PAXLOVID is safe for my child to take.**
  - **Fact:** PAXLOVID has not been approved for use among children and adolescents less than 18 years old.[3]

Links to More Information

1. Government of Canada. Details for: PAXLOVID. [Internet]. 2022. (Updated June 27th, 2023). Available from https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/paxlovid-en.html

2. Canadian Pharmacist's Association. Pharmacist Prescribing Authority Across Canada. [Internet]. 2024. Available from https://www.pharmacists.ca/cpha-ca/assets/File/pharmacy-in-canada/PharmacistPrescribingAuthority_June24_EN_web.pdf

3. Ontario Health. Recommendations for Antiviral Therapy for Adults with Mild to Moderate COVID-19 [Internet]. 2024 April 2nd. Available from https://www.ontariohealth.ca/sites/ontariohealth/files/Recommendations-for-Antiviral-Therapy-for-Adults-with-Mild-to-Moderate-COVID-19.pdf

4. Center for Disease Control. COVID-19 Treatment Clinical Care for Outpatients [Internet]. 2024 July 12. Available from https://www.cdc.gov/covid/hcp/clinical-care/outpatient-treatment.html

5. BC Centre for Disease Control. COVID-19 Patient Treatment Information [Internet]. 2024 May 22. Available from http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID-19_Treatment/Patient_information-PAXLOVID.pdf

6. Government of British Columbia. Paxlovid for B.C. Residents [Internet]. 2024 July 30. Available from https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/pharmacare-for-bc-residents/what-we-cover/paxlovid-for-bc-residents

7. Alberta Health Services. Outpatient Treatment for COVID-19 [Internet]. Available from https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17753.aspx

8. Government of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan Drug Plan [Internet]. Updated November 1st, 2024. Available from https://formulary.drugplan.ehealthsask.ca/SearchFormulary

9. Government of Manitoba. COVID-19 Testing and Treatment Guide [Internet]. Available from https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/testing.html

10. Ontario Health. COVID-19 Treatment [Internet]. Updated November 28th, 2024. Available from https://www.ontariohealth.ca/providing-health-care/clinical-resources-education/covid-19/treatment

11. Government of Quebec. Oral COVID-19 treatment (Paxlovid) [Internet]. Updated July 31 2024. Available from https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/symptoms-transmission-treatment/oral-treatment-against-covid-19-paxlovidmc

12. Government of New Brunswick. COVID-19 (Coronavirus) [Internet]. Available from https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/covid-19.html#:~:text=Paxlovid%E2%84%A2%20is%20used%20for,5%20days%20of%20developing%20symptoms

13. Nova Scotia Health. COVID-19 Medication and the Report and Support Form [Internet]. Available from https://www.nshealth.ca/reportandsupport

14. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Treatments [Internet]. Available from https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/treatments/

15. Government of Prince Edward Island. Paxlovid (antiviral treatment for COVID-19). 24 May 2024. Available from https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/paxlovid-antiviral-for-treating-covid-19

16. Government of Yukon. Find information about the COVID-19 treatment Paxlovid [Internet]. Available from https://yukon.ca/en/health-and-wellness/covid-19-information/your-health-covid-19/find-information-about-covid-19]

17. Government of Northwest Territories. COVID-19 [Internet]. Available from https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/covid-19

18. Government of Nunavut. Community Health Nursing Standards, Policies and Guidelines [Internet]. Available from https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2023-12/section_9_pharmacy_edited_13_03_23.pdf