

Paxlovid Q&A for Providers and Prescribers

What is Paxlovid?

Paxlovid (nirmatrelvir / ritonavir) is a Pfizer anti-viral oral medication authorized by Health Canada January 17, 2022 and indicated in the treatment of mild-to-moderate Covid-19 disease in adults with positive results of SARS-CoV-2 viral testing, and who are at high risk for progression to severe Covid-19 disease, including hospitalization or death. Paxlovid is not recommended in patients with severe renal impairment and may interact with various medications with serious or life-threatening adverse reactions.

Who qualifies?

See the referral form.

How do I prescribe Paxlovid?

In Mississauga, the Covid Cold and Flu Care Clinic @Mississauga Medical Arts can assist with the prescription. Assess your patient within 5 days of symptom onset, complete the referral form including the date and type of confirmatory covid-19 test (if done) and all the required criteria and send the referral form as soon as possible. Arrange follow-up with your patient during and after the treatment course.

What if I don't have an uptodate creatinine/eGFR for the patient?

Paxlovid requires a dose reduction in patients with moderate renal impairment (eGFR 30-60 ml/min) and is not recommended in patients with eGFR < 30ml/min. The clinic will order a creatinine but results take 1 day. Labs cannot be done on a Sunday. Lack of access to timely lab results may be a barrier to prescribing safely.

What if I don't know the patient's other medications?

Work with the patient to establish a list of prescriptions. Consult the patient's pharmacy. Do your best to have as complete a list as possible for the patient prior to sending the referral. The clinic has a pharmacy team on-site Monday to Friday to review drug interactions. For your own patients, consider sending the CPP from your EMR along with the referral form.

What if my patient needs paxlovid on a weekend?

The assessment centre is open but it does not have access to the pharmacy team and blood work. If a patient presents and qualifies for paxlovid on a Saturday or Sunday, the patient will be assessed and the positive covid test will be established. Monoclonal antibody treatment may be an alternative solution as the treatment with Paxlovid needs to happen by day 5 of symptoms onset. Please complete the referral form.

Which Covid-19 test is needed?

While PCR testing remains gold standard, any covid-19 test – IDNOW, PCR or Rapid Antigen Test (performed by a healthcare provider) is a valid test to use to confirm covid disease when prescribing paxlovid.

What if I see a patient who may need it in the ER?

Assess the patient, order a covid PCR test (or RAT if the timeline from onset of symptoms is tight), order a creatinine and eGFR. Counsel the patient regarding paxlovid, complete the referral form, send the patient home with the necessary supports (covid@home referral) and any other therapies indicated (as per the Science Table Jan 21, 2022 treatment document). Fax the referral form to the clinic.

What if I see a patient who may need it in an outpatient setting outside of Mississauga?

Assess the patient, and ensure they meet criteria and send the referral form to their local Covid Assessment center so they can be confirmed with a positive covid test. If you have confirmation of a positive test and think they are candidate for Paxlovid, fill the referral form and send directly to Mississauga Medical Arts.

Is this the same as monoclonal antibody therapy?

No – if your patient requires monoclonal antibody therapy use the THP referral or provincial form and follow that process.

What if I have questions?

Check the clinic website. (Covidinfo.ca) Consult colleagues. Review the paxlovid referral form and the Science Table Therapeutic Management January 21, 2022 document.