

COVID Treatment Referral and Antiviral Update

July 19, 2024

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Central Zone Pharmacy Department and NS Health COVID-19 Non-Severe Treatment Team

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NS Health Inpatient Services, Emergency Departments, Outpatient Clinics, and Long-Term Care Facilities

ISSUE

- Best practice
- Drug shortage
- Pack size/packaging change
- Medication change
- Recall
- Medication Advisory
- Other: COVID Treatment Referral and Antiviral Update

CONTACT

COVIDTreatment@nshealth.ca

Non-Severe COVID Treatment Referral and Antiviral Update

As of March 31, 2024, the federal government no longer provides free COVID-19 antivirals, including nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid™) and remdesivir (Veklury®). As of May 31, 2024, the remaining free federal nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid™) supply expired. The remaining remdesivir (Veklury®) free federal supply continues to be in date and is projected to last approximately 4 months.

An interim Formulary approval was granted for NS Health **inpatients** at high risk for developing severe COVID-19 to continue to be prescribed nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid™) or remdesivir (Veklury®) by a [designated prescriber](#) using the NS Health [referral criteria](#).

Please note, the pathway to achieve the timeliest nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid™) assessment is by referral to the NS Health COVID-19 Non-Severe Treatment Team using the [Nova Scotia Health Report and Support form](#). The [form](#) can be completed online at <https://c19hc.nshealth.ca/self-report> or by calling 1-833-797-7772 (option 2).

Although non-severe COVID-19 ambulatory patients may be prescribed nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid™) by any physician or nurse practitioner, **referral to the NS Health COVID-19 Non-Severe Treatment Team via the [Nova Scotia Health Report and Support form](#) is recommended for all settings including NS Health Emergency Departments, outpatient clinics and long-term care facilities.**

Nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid™) has many serious drug interactions with commonly used medications, is contraindicated with some medications (e.g., post-transplant immunosuppressants, anticonvulsants), and often requires modifications to the patient's home medications (e.g., anticoagulants, psychiatric medications and more). The NS Health COVID-19 Non-Severe Treatment Team continues to assist with navigating interactions and can facilitate access to IV remdesivir (Veklury®) if needed.

The COVID-19 Non-Severe Treatment Team is available to answer questions from health care professionals 7 days a week between 9am and 5pm by phone: 1-833-714-2784 or e-mail: COVIDTreatment@nshealth.ca. All voicemails and emails will receive a response within 24 hours to ensure timely assessment and access to antivirals.

For further information please contact COVIDTreatment@nshealth.ca.