

# Nirmatrelvir and Ritonavir (Paxlovid®)

## What is nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®)?

- A combination of two medications, nirmatrelvir and ritonavir, taken together to treat individuals with mild to moderate symptoms of COVID-19.
- Nirmatrelvir is an antiviral that prevents the virus that causes COVID-19 from multiplying. Ritonavir helps nirmatrelvir work in the body.
- Health Canada has approved nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®) for COVID-19 with a "Notice of Compliance with Terms and Conditions." This means safety and effectiveness information will continue to be monitored as the medications are used more.

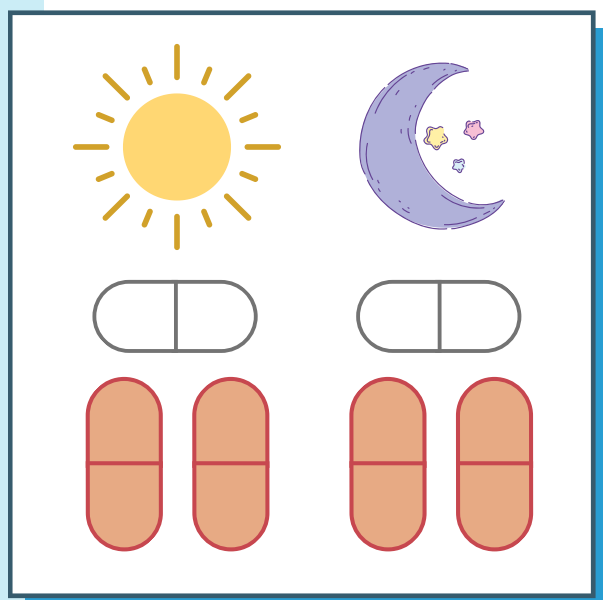


## How may nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®) be helpful for COVID-19?

- In people with mild or moderate symptoms of COVID-19, taking nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®) may reduce the risk the infection will worsen to become severe and require hospitalization or progress to death.

## Who may benefit from nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®)?

- Adults at high risk for getting very sick (for example, the elderly, those without vaccination, or with certain underlying medical conditions or immunosuppression) may benefit from treatment. Nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®) is only useful in the early stages of infection (within 5 days of feeling ill and within 5 days of a positive COVID-19 test).
- Nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®) may not be appropriate for those with liver or kidney disease, other serious illnesses, or if you are pregnant or planning on becoming pregnant. **Many prescription medications, over-the-counter products, traditional medicines, natural health products, and vitamins interact with Nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®) and cannot be taken together (see next page).**



## How do I take nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®)?

- Take 2 nirmatrelvir (pink) tablets and 1 ritonavir (white) tablet by mouth in the morning and evening.
  - For individuals with kidney disease, the dose may be different.
- When possible, tablets should be swallowed whole. If not possible, including administration via enteral tube, please contact the dispensing pharmacy/pharmacist for more information.
- Tablets may be taken with or without food.
- If you miss a dose and it is within 8 hours of the time it is usually taken, take the dose as soon as you remember. If it has been more than 8 hours, skip the dose and take your next dose at your regular time.

## What are the possible side effects?

- A change in your sense of taste (about 6 out of 100 people may experience this)
- Diarrhea (about 3 out of 100 people may experience this)
- High blood pressure (about 1 out of 100 people may experience this)
- Muscle aches (about 1 out of 100 people may experience this)
- Liver problems are also possible. **Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of liver problems: loss of appetite, yellowing of your skin and the whites of eyes (jaundice), dark-colored urine, pale colored stools and itchy skin, stomach area (abdominal) pain.**
- Since nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®) are relatively new, not all possible side effects are known. Some may be serious. If you have concerns, reach out to your healthcare provider.

## What should I do if my COVID-19 symptoms get worse?

- For minor changes in your symptoms, call 811 or your primary healthcare provider to discuss questions or concerns.
- **Call 911 immediately** if you experience any severe symptoms such as: **difficulty breathing, severe chest pain, loss of consciousness, or feelings of confusion.**

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## Interactions

Tell your nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®) prescriber and pharmacist that dispenses nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®) about all prescription medications, over-the-counter products, traditional medicines, natural health products, and vitamins you are using.

Nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®) interacts with many prescription medications, over-the-counter products, traditional medicines, natural health products, and vitamins which may result in serious side effects. This includes products taken by mouth, injection, eye drops, inhalers, creams, and nasal sprays. Do not start taking new prescription medications, over-the-counter products, traditional medicines, natural health products, and vitamins while on nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®) without checking with your pharmacist to ensure it is safe.

There are many medications that interact with nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid®) and may need special management during your treatment. Monitoring of laboratory tests or bloodwork, or changes to the dose of other medications may be necessary.