



Drug Coverage Decision for BC PharmaCare

About PharmaCare

BC PharmaCare is a publicly funded drug plan that helps B.C. residents pay for most prescription drugs and pharmacy services, and some medical devices and supplies.

Details of Drug Reviewed

Drug	nirmatrelvir-ritonavir
Brand name	Paxlovid™
Dosage forms	150 mg -100 mg tablets copackaged for oral use
Manufacturer	Pfizer Canada
Submission type	New Submission
Indication reviewed	For the treatment of 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.
Canada's Drug Agency (CDA-AMC) Reimbursement Reviews (CRR)	CRR recommendation: to Reimburse with clinical criteria and/or conditions. Visit the CRR website for more details .
Provincial Review	The Ministry of Health's drug coverage decision considered various inputs including: the final reviews completed by the CRR on November 23, 2023, which included clinical and pharmacoeconomic evidence review material and the recommendations from the Canadian Drug Expert Committee (CDEC), the recommendations of the BC Covid Therapeutics Committee (CTC), Patient Input Questionnaire responses from thirteen patients, two caregivers and two patient groups from Your Voice and a Budget Impact Assessment (BIA) .
Drug Coverage Decision	Plan Z (Assurance Plan) benefit
Date	May 27, 2024

Reasons	<p>Drug coverage decision is consistent with the recommendations of the CDEC and the BC CTC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The drug demonstrated a small advantage over placebo with respect to efficacy as measured by reductions in the incidence of COVID-19 related hospitalization in patients who are moderately or severely immunocompromised. • Nirmatrelvir-ritonavir has more side effects when compared to placebo. Side effects can include altered taste, diarrhea, muscle aches, or nausea. Nirmatrelvir-ritonavir also has numerous drug interactions. • The Ministry participated in the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance negotiations with the manufacturer which were able to address the concerns identified by the CRR with respect to the cost-effectiveness and value for money. • On May 27, 2024, Paxlovid is fully covered under PharmaCare’s Plan Z (Assurance Plan). • PharmaCare coverage replaces the federal government supply which ended in March 2024. Plan Z (Assurance) provides full coverage of Paxlovid for BC residents with active Medical Services Plan (MSP) coverage. Exceptional Plan Z coverage (e.g., patients who live outside of BC or Canada) for Paxlovid will no longer be available.
Other Information	The Ministry of Health has added prescribing guidance to the Paxlovid prescription eForm that prescribers are strongly encouraged to use.

The drug review process in B.C.

A manufacturer submits a request to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry).

An independent group called the [Drug Benefit Council \(DBC\)](#) gives advice to the Ministry by considering:

- whether the drug is safe and effective
- advice from a national group called [Canada's Drug Agency](#) (CDA-AMC)
- what the drug costs and whether funding it provides good value to the province
- ethical considerations of covering and not covering the drug
- input from physicians, patients, caregivers, patient groups and drug submission sponsors

The Ministry makes a BC PharmaCare coverage decision by taking into account:

- existing BC PharmaCare policies, programs and resources
- the evidence-informed advice of the DBC
- drugs already covered by BC PharmaCare that treat similar medical conditions
- the overall cost of covering the drug

Visit [BC PharmaCare](#) and [Drug reviews](#) for more information.

This document is intended for information only.

It does not take the place of advice from a physician or other qualified health care provider.