

BC PharmaCare

Drug Information

The drug below is being considered for possible coverage under the B.C. PharmaCare program. PharmaCare is a government-funded drug plan that helps British Columbians with the cost of eligible prescription drugs and specific medical supplies. For more information on PharmaCare, visit [Ministry of Health - PharmaCare](#).

PharmaCare reviews each drug for treating a specific illness or medical condition (known as an “indication”). If a decision is made to cover the drug, it will be only for that illness or condition.

In some cases, PharmaCare may cover a drug only for people who have the illness or condition and have not responded to other drugs used to treat that illness or condition.

For more information on PharmaCare’s drug coverage review process, see the last page of this information sheet.

Information about the drug	
Generic name (scientific name)	nirmatrelvir-ritonavir
Brand name	Paxlovid™
Manufacturer	Pfizer Canada ULC
Indication	For the treatment of mild-to-moderate COVID-19 in adults at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19
Has the drug been reviewed by the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH)? (see the note below this table.)	Yes For more information about the CADTH Reimbursement Review (CRR) of nirmatrelvir-ritonavir (Paxlovid), you can Search the CADTH Reports .
Public input start date	Wednesday, November 22, 2023
Public input closing date	Tuesday, December 19, 2023 AT 11:59 PM
How is the drug taken?	Paxlovid is taken orally (by the mouth).
How often is the drug taken?	Paxlovid is taken twice daily for five days.

General drug and/or drug study information

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an illness caused by a virus called “severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2” or SARS-CoV-2. COVID-19 can cause a wide variety of symptoms which can range from mild to severe. Most cases are mild, with symptoms such as fever and general discomfort (malaise). However, severe cases can result in very low levels of oxygen in the body and a life-threatening build-up of fluid in the lungs. In some patients, mild-to-moderate COVID-19 can result in severe medical complications.

Paxlovid is being reviewed by PharmaCare for the treatment of mild-to-moderate COVID-19 in adults with positive results of direct SARS-CoV-2 viral testing, and who are at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19, including hospitalization or death. The most common method of direct viral testing is the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, which detects the virus in respiratory samples taken from nose or throat swabs.

The greatest risk factors for progression to severe COVID-19 are being older than 80 years of age, frailty, being unvaccinated and never having been infected with the virus, and severe immunosuppression.

Immunosuppression is a condition in which a person’s immune system is very weak. It can be caused by a medical condition or by a medication or treatment for a disease.

Paxlovid consists of two antiviral medicines packaged together: nirmatrelvir and ritonavir. Nirmatrelvir-ritonavir stops the virus from multiplying. This can help patients to overcome the viral infection and may help speed recovery.

Studies looked at the following:

- Proportion of patients with COVID-19-related hospitalization or death from any cause through day 28 of the clinical trial
- Proportion of patients with severe signs/symptoms attributed to COVID-19 through day 28 of the clinical trial
- Proportion of patients with death (all cause) through day 28 of the clinical trial
- Bad reactions
- Serious bad reactions
- Patients leaving the trial due to bad reactions

Information about the drug	
Other considerations	None

Note:

The Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH) is a national organization that reviews drugs on behalf of Canadian public sector plans when manufacturers want to have the jurisdictions provide coverage for the drugs. For detailed information on B.C. PharmaCare's drug review process, including the role of the CADTH Reimbursement Review (CRR) in that process, see [The Drug Review Process in B.C. - Overview](#).

Cost of the drug under review compared to other drugs used to treat the same indication				
generic name (Brand Name) of Drug Comparator	PharmaCare Status (if and how the drug is already covered)	Dosage Form	Usual Dose	Cost Per Course of Treatment
nirmatrelvir- ritonavir (Paxlovid)	Under Review	Tablets	Twice daily for five days	\$1,392 ^a
<i>Polymerase Inhibitors</i>				
remdesivir (Veklury)	Non-Benefit under PharmaCare	Powder for solution for intravenous (IV) infusion	Daily for three to ten days	\$1,546 to \$5,155 ^b

^a Manufacturer's submitted price plus 8% markup.

^b Price as per CADTH Pharmacoeconomic Review Report for nirmatrelvir-ritonavir.

The Drug Review Process in B.C.

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

An independent group called the [Drug Benefit Council \(DBC\)](#) gives advice to the Ministry. The DBC looks at:

- whether the drug is safe and effective
- advice from a national group called the [Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health \(CADTH\)](#)
- what the drug costs and whether it is a good value for the people of B.C.
- ethical considerations involved with covering or not covering the drug
- input from physicians, patients, caregivers, patient groups and drug submission sponsors

The Ministry makes PharmaCare coverage decisions by taking into account:

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

For more information about the B.C. Drug Review Process, visit: [The Drug Review Process in B.C. - Overview](#).

This document is intended for information only.

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