

## NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN) ALERT

### COVID-19 Update - Paxlovid Prescribing

8/24/23

**Background:** As the number of COVID-19 cases rises across the US, the New Mexico Department of Health recommends that providers prescribe Paxlovid (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) to all appropriate patients diagnosed with COVID-19. Paxlovid, an oral antiviral, is a highly effective treatment for COVID-19 but continues to be under prescribed by providers<sup>1</sup>. Support for the use of Paxlovid comes from several randomized trials and observational studies of symptomatic outpatients with COVID-19, which demonstrated a reduction in hospitalization and death.

The CDC recommends that all eligible adults, regardless of vaccination status, receive Paxlovid within 5 days of symptom onset. A retrospective study published in the MMWR found that patients prescribed Paxlovid, including those with previous infection or vaccination, had a 51% lower hospitalization rate than those who were not prescribed Paxlovid<sup>1</sup>.

Paxlovid has been available under an emergency use authorization since December 2021 and received full FDA approval on May 25, 2023, for the treatment of mild-to-moderate COVID-19 in adults who are at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19, including hospitalization or death.

#### Recommendations for Clinicians:

Paxlovid is recommended for treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19 in adults (ages 18 years of age and older) and children (12 - 18 years of age weighing at least 40 kg) who are at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19 disease. Paxlovid can be prescribed for people who:

- Have mild to moderate COVID-19 and are within 5 days of symptom onset and
- Have one or more [risk factors](#) for severe COVID-19 including age over 50 and having chronic medical conditions.

In addition:

- Paxlovid may be given to individuals who are pregnant.
- Paxlovid has shown benefit in both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals with risk factors.
- Obtain a full medication list to evaluate for drug interactions.
- Renal dosing is needed for patients with an eGFR of 30 – 59 (renal dose pack is available).
- Paxlovid is not recommended for patients with severe renal (eGFR < 30) or hepatic impairment.
- A positive COVID-19 test is not required to prescribe Paxlovid. Clinicians may prescribe Paxlovid if clinical presentation is consistent with COVID-19.
- Steroids such as dexamethasone and prednisone are NOT recommended for the treatment of outpatients with COVID-19.

#### EPIDEMIOLOGY AND RESPONSE

**Prescribing Paxlovid:**

The FDA has developed a [Paxlovid Patient Eligibility Screening Checklist Tool for Prescribers](#) which includes information on the most common drug interactions.

eGFR (CKD=EPI formula)	Dosage of (Nirmatrelvir/Ritonavir)
>60 ml/min	300/100 by mouth twice daily for 5 days
30-60 ml/min	150/100 by mouth twice daily for 5 days
<30 ml/min	Not recommended

**Drug Interactions:**

The NIH guidelines advise that “drug-drug interactions that can be safely managed should not preclude the use of this medication”. To check for drug interactions: [Liverpool COVID-19 Interactions \(covid19-druginteractions.org\)](#)

**COVID-19 Rebound after Paxlovid:**

COVID-19 rebound may occur in patients treated with Paxlovid 2-8 days after the initial recovery and is characterized by a recurrence of symptoms or a new positive viral test after having tested negative. In the Paxlovid clinical trial, a small number of Paxlovid and placebo patients had COVID-19 rebound with no increases in hospitalizations or deaths. There is no evidence of SARS-CoV-2 resistance to Paxlovid. Retreatment with a second course of Paxlovid is NOT recommended. The CDC issued further detailed guidance on [COVID-19 Rebound](#) after Paxlovid.

Patients who experience COVID-19 rebound should follow [CDC Guidelines for Isolation](#):

- Isolate again at least 5 days.
- Wear a mask for 10 days from when rebound symptoms started
- Contact a healthcare provider if COVID-19 rebound symptoms persist or worsen

**Pharmacist Prescribing:**

Pharmacists can continue to prescribe Paxlovid under the EUA but must:

1. Obtain recent health records (within the last 12 months) assessing kidney and liver function, or consulting with a health care provider who has an established provider-patient relationship with the individual patient to assess the patient’s kidney and liver function.
2. Obtain a complete medication list.
3. Refer patients to medical provider if there is insufficient information to assess renal/hepatic function, drug interactions, or for patients who require modifications due to drug interaction.

**Availability of Paxlovid:**

Paxlovid manufactured and packaged under the emergency use authorization (EUA) and distributed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will continue to be available at no cost to patients until the current stockpile is exhausted. Patients having difficulty finding a prescribing provider can call the NM DOH COVID-19 Call Center at 1-855-600-3453 during the following hours: Monday – Friday 7am – 8pm and Saturday – Sunday 10 am – 4pm.

**References:**

1. Shah MM, Joyce B, Plumb ID, et al. Paxlovid Associated with Decreased Hospitalization Rate Among Adults with COVID-19 — United States, April–September 2022. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2022;71:1531–1537. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7148e2>

**Additional Resources:**

2. FDA Prescribing Fact Sheet for Providers (EUA): [Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers Emergency Use Authorization For Paxlovid \(fda.gov\)](#)
3. FDA Approved Label Information: [label \(fda.gov\)](#)
4. University of Liverpool Drug Interaction Checker: [Liverpool COVID-19 Interactions \(covid19-druginteractions.org\)](#)
5. NIH Treatment Guidelines: [Antivirals, Including Antibody Products | COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines \(nih.gov\)](#)
6. CDC Guidance: [Interim Clinical Considerations for COVID-19 Treatment in Outpatients | CDC](#)

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**New Mexico Health Alert Network:** To register for the NM Health Alert Network, please visit the following site <https://nm.readyop.com/fs/4cjz/10b2> Please fill out the registration form completely and click Submit at the bottom of the page, to begin receiving Important health alerts, advisories, and updates.

**Please Note** that our system also utilizes text messaging to notify members of important health information. Due to FCC Regulation changes that are designed to decrease the amount of unwanted spam text messages sent each year to citizens, please save, this phone number **(855) 596-1810** as the “**New Mexico Health Alert Network**” default phone number for your account used for text messages on the mobile device(s) you register with us.