COVID-19 Care in the Community - Case Management in Pharmacy Operational Guide

April 2022

Medication Management Consult: Paxlovid™

Eligibility Criteria:

COVID-19 *positive* patient who have been prescribed Paxlovid™ require a Medication Management Consult with a pharmacist at a Paxlovid™ access pharmacy, via phone or virtually.

The pharmacy may also claim for:

- Medication delivery

Background

Nirmatrelvir with ritonavir (Paxlovid™) is the first oral antiviral treatment available in New Zealand for COVID-19. It is indicated for treatment of acute symptomatic COVID-19 in adults 18 years of age and older, who do not require initiation of supplemental oxygen due to COVID-19. It reduces the risk of hospitalisation for those who have a higher risk of hospitalisation or becoming seriously unwell. Treatment should be initiated as early as possible and within five days of symptom onset.

The mechanism of action of ritonavir is boosting the levels of nirmatrelvir by inhibiting CYP3A4. Ritonavir is also an inhibitor of CYP2D6 and P-glycoprotein transporters. Therefore Paxlovid™ unfortunately comes with a large array of drug interactions. It is imperative that all patients are assessed for drug interactions prior to initiating treatment.

Renal dose adjustment is required for the nirmatrelvir component of Paxlovid.™

What is the process?

1. Ensure that prescription is endorsed

Pharmac has specific eligibility for patients to access Paxlovid™. Prescribers need to endorse the prescription accordingly. For more information on eligibility criteria see tools below.

2. Check for interactions and if co-medicines have been modified appropriately

The pharmacist will need to review for potential for drug interactions. To do this you will need to ascertain a full list of medications that the patient is taking. Sources may include:

- The patient and/or their whānau.
- General practice.
- The patient's usual pharmacy.
- Clinical portal.

To assess the risk of interactions:

- Use the [University of Liverpool's COVID-19 interaction checker](#).
- Consult the [Ontario Science Brief](#) for specific advice on management of interactions.

The and [New Zealand Formulary](#) and [Medsafe data sheet](#) are also reliable resources but may not be updated as quickly and frequently as the Liverpool and Ontario websites.

3. Check the patient's renal function and that the correct dosage has been prescribed

Prescribers are asked to include an eGFR (if available) on the prescription. If you have any concerns where an eGFR has not been provided, other ways to find this information is:

- Clinical Portal.
- Contact the Practice's Clinical Pharmacist Facilitator.

Dosing:

- eGFR above 60mL/min/1.73m^2 : **Two** 150mg tablets of nirmatrelvir and one 100mg tablet of ritonavir are to be taken together twice a day for five days.
- eGFR 30 – 60mL/min/1.73m^2: **One** 150mg tablets of nirmatrelvir and one 100mg tablet of ritonavir are to be taken together twice a day for five days. Pharmacists adjusting the dose for this purpose may refer to information provided by the supplier, or the tablets may be repackaged in a compliance pack.
- eGFR below 30mL/min/1.73m^2: Paxlovid^{TM} is not currently recommended.

4. Check for contraindications

Refer to the Paxlovid^{TM} Medsafe data sheet for a full description of contraindications.

5. Communicate with prescriber

Pharmacists will need to contact the prescriber if there are any clinical issues with the prescription and resolve these collaboratively. Prescribers are asked to provide their contact phone number on the prescription. If you cannot contact the prescriber then you will need to contact the practice. It is recommended that communication follows the ISBAR framework

6. Give patient advice
Adverse effects

Common side effects are generally mild and include impaired sense of taste, diarrhoea, vomiting and headache. Less commonly high blood pressure and muscle aches are reported.

Advise patient to contact the prescriber or pharmacy if they experience adverse events or worsening of condition. Pharmacists and prescribers are asked to report any adverse events to the Centre for Adverse Reactions Monitoring (CARM).

How to take Paxlovid^{TM}
Treatment should be started within 5 days of first symptoms.
The 5 day course of two medicines contains:

- Nirmatrelvir, a protease inhibitor, which blocks virus replication (2 (or 1 in renal impairment) pink tablets twice daily).
- Ritonavir which slows the breakdown of nirmatrelvir (1 white tablet twice daily).

7. Dispense and claim

Paxlovid^{TM} is listed as XPharm on the Pharmaceutical Schedule.

- Dispense as an NSS prescription and the ensure the cost is calculated as $0. There is no charge to the patient.
- The pharmacist will physically need to adjust the whole-pack for renal impairment for the patient and ensure the instruction label states a renal dose.

- A Medication Management Consult and a Medication Delivery (if utilised) can be claimed for via the Halcyon claiming form.

8. Deliver medication to the patient

Patients are encouraged to ask non-isolating support people to visit the pharmacy and pick up their medications. Where this is not possible the pharmacy can use their usual delivery service (or a courier service or taxi, funded by the pharmacy) and claim a Medication Delivery fee at one claim per day per person.

8. Communicate to usual pharmacy

Advise the patient's usual pharmacy that Paxlovid™ has been dispensed.

Accessing Clinical Portal

Details on how to access clinical information from Clinical Portal can be accessed here.
If you do not have access to Clinical Portal please contact the HBDHB Pharmacy Portfolio Manager.

Obtaining Stock

Initially, there has been allocations of stock to each DHB. Paxlovid™ was distributed by the wholesaler to participating pharmacies. Pharmacies have been selected on the basis of their capacity to service high needs populations.
Pharmac have contracted ProPharma as the wholesaler. Stock of Paxlovid™ will be available to be ordered from ProPharma using standard processes, once more stock becomes available.
If your pharmacy has no stock you can contact other pharmacies with stock to move stock or refer script to pharmacy with stock with patient consent. If stock is moved contact Propharma with details on how much stock was moved and to which pharmacy.

Rural hospitals

The process to maintain stock in rural hospital settings is:

- Local pharmacies supply maximum of two packs of Paxlovid to rural hospitals. Each box should be labelled with what can be completed ahead of time, leaving space for the prescriber to fill in patient details and dosing.
- When a pack is used, the prescriber must send a prescription to the participating pharmacy who supplied the stock for retrospective dispensing.
- The pharmacy must process the prescription via dispensing system (rather than process via PSO) so that the supply and patient details are recorded within NZePS for national monitoring purposes.
- The pharmacist will complete a retrospective medicines review, and contact the patient to see how they are going with their treatment. This will enable pharmacies to claim the Medication management consult fee.
- The pharmacy can then replace the rural hospital's stock. Stock should not be replaced unless a retrospective prescription is received.

Tools available:

- He ako hiringa Treating COVID-19 with Paxlovid in primary care
- Christchurch medicines information service : Drug interactions with nirmatrelvir with ritonavir
- Pharmac access criteria for oral COVID-19 treatments
- Paxlovid™ data sheet

- NZF Paxlovid PIL
- Useful pages on the Liverpool website include a flow chart *"Assessing a patient for treatment with Paxlovid"* and drug interaction tables *"Interactions with selected WHO essential medicines and Paxlovid"*.
- ISBAR communication framework between health care workers
- Patient fact sheet: COVID-19 Seeking medical help – when and how
- AHANZ telehealth practice in New Zealand (see pg. 3 and 4)
- Positions to make breathing easier

References:

- Pharmac. Decision on access criteria for oral COVID-19 treatments. Decision on access criteria for oral COVID-19 treatments - Pharmac | New Zealand Government. Accessed April 2022
- He Ako Hiringa. Treating COVID-19 with Paxlovid in primary care. Treating COVID-19 with Paxlovid in primary care | He Ako Hiringa. Accessed April 2022
- New Zealand Ministry of Health. Information and guidance for the health sector: Paxlovid™ oral therapeutic for COVID-19 community treatment. March 2022
- New Zealand Ministry of Health. *Medsafe data sheet (Paxlovid).* Data Sheet Template (medsafe.govt.nz). Accessed April 2022