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

September 2023

Molnupiravir (Lagevrio™) supply

Eligibility Criteria:

A COVID-19 antiviral eligibility review may be claimed for:
A trained Pharmacist undertaking a clinical review and consultation with the patient for the supply of a COVID-19 antiviral where an antiviral is not supplied, because the patient does not meet the PHARMAC criteria.
or

A Medication Management Consult may be claimed for:
A trained Pharmacist undertaking a clinical review and consultation with the patient for the supply of molnupiravir via a Prescription or as a Pharmacist Only Medicine, via phone or virtual consultation, as set out in this operational guide and/or PSNZ requirements, where the patient does meet the PHARMAC criteria.
The pharmacy may also claim for (if utilised):

- Medication delivery.
- Compliance packaging for COVID-19 specific medicines.

Note: The Therapeutic Technical Advisory Group advises that Paxlovid™ (or remdesivir) are preferable treatments to molnupiravir in non-hospitalised patients with COVID-19.

Background

Molnupiravir (Lagevrio™) is a nucleoside analogue which causes catastrophic errors in viral replication. Molnupiravir is less effective than nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid™) and remdesivir at preventing hospitalisations, its place in therapy is when other COVID-19 antivirals have been considered but are unable to be used or contraindicated.

Paxlovid™ or remdesivir are preferable treatments to molnupiravir in non-hospitalised patients with COVID-19. From 15 August 2023 molnupiravir is available subject to its own set of access criteria. Criteria include consideration of other preferred treatments. The criteria can be found here.

In late July oral antivirals were re-classified as pharmacist-only (restricted) medicines. The process for supplying antivirals on a prescription or as a pharmacist-only medicine are essentially the same:

- Assess eligibility and symptoms.
- Clinically review.
- Communicate with prescriber or primary care/ document.
- Counsel the patient.
- Communicate with usual pharmacy.

Rebound infection

COVID-19 rebound of symptoms can occur in patients with or without antiviral treatment. Current recommendations are that if patients' symptoms return within 28 days from their previous infection, they are not required to repeat a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) and should stay at home until

24 hours after symptoms resolve. Typically, this rebound infection resolves within 3 to 5 days without any specific treatment.

If the patient has already been treated with antivirals such as Paxlovid®, **further antiviral treatment should not be provided**. There is no evidence to suggest that repeat treatment provides any additional benefit, as rebound symptoms are usually mild and require only supportive treatments.

What are the tools and training required to dispense oral antivirals?

To supply molnupiravir as a Pharmacist-only or Prescription medicine you will need:

	Pharmacist-only (restricted) medicine	Prescription medicine
Training	Complete PSNZ COVID-19 Antiviral Medicines Clinical Training Programme and follow this operational guide.	No specific training required. Follow this operational guide.
Clinical tools available	Clinical Portal and Primary Care Portal within Clinical Portal ReCare CCCM	Clinical Portal and Primary Care Portal within cCinical portal ReCare CCCM
Communication tools and skills	AHANZ telehealth practice in New Zealand (see pg. 3 and 4) Telehealth Online learning modules from Collaborative Aotearoa	

What is the process for suppling Molnupiravir?

Assess eligibility criteria and symptoms

Pharmac has specific eligibility for patients to access molnupiravir. For more information on eligibility criteria see tools below.

Confirm the person has ONLY mild to moderate symptoms of COVID-19 and is well enough to be managed in the community (see the PSNZ Clinical Decision Pathway for more information).

If the person does not meet the Pharmac criteria:

If after reviewing the patient for eligibility you discover that they do not meet the access criteria, you cannot supply Paxlovid™. You may claim a **COVID-19 antiviral eligibility review. Multiple slots cannot be claimed.**

Clinically review

Check clinical suitability

Molnupiravir is considerably less effective than Paxlovid™ and remdesivir at preventing hospitalisations. Molnupiravir is therefore reserved for cases where other COVID antivirals are contraindicated, such as in severely reduced renal function or where medication interactions cannot be managed and prohibit its use. See the Therapeutics Technical Advisory Group advice around molnupiravir use.

As part of dispensing a molnupiravir prescription, the pharmacist needs to consider whether Paxlovid™ would have been an appropriate alternative. To do this you will need to review for potential drug interactions and assess renal function. If Paxlovid™ is a potentially viable option, contact the practice's Clinical Pharmacist Facilitator (CPF), or prescriber if the practice does not have a CPF or the CPF is unavailable, to discuss. See Operational guide Paxlovid™ for more details.

Check for contraindications

Oral antivirals are not recommended in pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Refer to the molnupiravir Medsafe data sheet for a full description of contraindications.

Communicate with prescriber/ document

Pharmacists will need to contact the prescriber, or the patient's usual GP to resolve issues collaboratively if:

- a prescription is not endorsed,
- a pharmacist identifies that Paxlovid™ may be a more appropriate option for patient prescribed molnupiravir,
- or any other clinical issues are identified.

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.

Any discussion with the prescriber and the patient should be documented and any consultation for an antiviral as a Pharmacist Only medicine needs to be recorded in CCCM irrespective of whether the patient receives the antiviral or not.

Counselling the patient

Adverse effects

Common side effects are generally mild and include impaired sense of taste, diarrhoea, vomiting and headache. Less commonly rash and urticaria have been 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).

Contraception advice

Women should use contraception during and for at least 4 days after the final dose. Men who have partners of childbearing potential should be advised to use contraception during and for 3 months after treatment.

How to take molnupiravir

Treatment should be started within 5 days of first symptoms. The recommended dose of molnupiravir in adult patients is 800 mg (four 200 mg capsules) taken orally every 12 hours for 5 days, with or without food. It should be swallow whole and not crushed or chewed.

Communicate with usual pharmacy

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

Claiming

Molnupiravir 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 following can be claimed for via the Halcyon claiming form if eligible and utilised:

- A Medication Management Consult per 15 minutes of consultation (maximum of 3 timeslots).
- Medication Delivery.
- Compliance packaging for COVID-19 specific medicines.

Medication Delivery

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 contracted alternative funded by the pharmacy) and claim a Medication Delivery fee at one claim per day per person.

Compliance packaging

The pharmacy may claim a compliance packaging fee at one claim per person if a pharmacist or clinician deems it appropriate for an oral antiviral to be repackaged into compliance packaging provided that:

- The reason for compliance packaging is stated within the patient's record.
- The patient/carer is provided training on compliance packaging via phone or virtually.

Compliance packaging for this patient is **not** funded via any other sources or agreement.

Obtaining Stock

Stock of molnupiravir can be ordered from approved wholesalers (currently ProPharma) using standard processes.

Tools available:

- PSNZ Covid-19 Antiviral Clinical Training Programme
- Lagevrio™ data sheet
- Molnupiravir access criteria
- Pharmac COVID-19 antiviral access criteria flow chart
- COVID-19: Advice for all health professionals
- 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
- CCCM support: 0800 223 987 or citc@contacttracing.health.nz
- COVID-19: Advice for all health professionals | Ministry of Health NZ (includes advice around advanced prescriptions

References:

- Pharmac. COVID-19 antivirals: Decision on the role of molnupiravir in New Zealand's treatment portfolio. COVID-19 antivirals: Decision on the role of molnupiravir in New Zealand's treatments portfolio - Pharmac | New Zealand Government Accessed July 2023.
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- New Zealand Ministry of Health. *Medsafe data sheet (Lagevrio).* lagevirocap.pdf (medsafe.govt.nz). Accessed Sept 2023
- PSNZ Covid-19 Antiviral Clinical Training Programme. Accessed Sept 2023.

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