

## **Nirmatrelvir/Ritonavir (Paxlovid) Guidance for Healthcare Professionals**

**Updated January 13, 2023**

On January 17, 2022, Health Canada granted approval of Nirmatrelvir/Ritonavir (Paxlovid), the first oral antiviral medication indicated for the treatment of mild-to-moderate COVID-19 in adults who are at high risk for progression to severe illness, including hospitalization or death.

A limited supply of Nirmatrelvir/Ritonavir has been procured by the Government of Canada, and Newfoundland and Labrador has received an allocation from this supply. Prescribers will use the Screening and Prescribing Form to identify patients who may benefit from treatment with nirmatrelvir/ritonavir and screen out those individuals who would not be eligible for treatment due to contraindications. The Screening and Prescribing Form serves as the official prescription and can be sent to a pharmacy of the individual's choice for the purposes of dispensing, following confirmation that the preferred pharmacy is stocking Paxlovid. During dispensing, the pharmacy will coordinate with the patient for delivery or contactless pickup.

Effective May 13, 2022, the Authorization to Prescribe Regulations under the Pharmacy Act, were amended to allow pharmacists in Newfoundland and Labrador to prescribe medications for the treatment and prevention of COVID-19 within their scope of practice. As a result, pharmacists who meet the requirements of the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board to prescribe, may choose to complete the Screening and Prescribing Form on behalf of patients requesting Paxlovid.

Access to treatment involves prioritization of individuals who are at highest risk for severe illness and hospitalization. In Newfoundland and Labrador, Nirmatrelvir/ritonavir may be a treatment option for patients:

- Who have been symptomatic for 5 days or less; and
- Have tested positive for Covid-19 on a PCR or rapid antigen test; and
- Who have not been admitted to hospital (exception is made for patients in hospital but under Alternate Level of Care); and
- Who are not contraindicated for treatment with nirmatrelvir/ritonavir; and
- Who are considered high risk for hospitalization or death due to Covid-19:
  - Immunocompromised adults not expected to mount an adequate immune response to SARS-CoV-2 infection, regardless of COVID-19 vaccine status; or
  - Individuals  $\geq 60$  years of age, regardless of vaccination status.