



News Release: Paxlovid Now Available in NL Community Pharmacies

May 17, 2022 St. John's Pharmacists in Newfoundland and Labrador can now assess for, prescribe and dispense Paxlovid, the oral COVID-19 anti-viral.

To be effective, Paxlovid must be administered within the first five days of symptom onset, meaning that convenience and ease of access play important roles. The medication, a combination of antiviral drugs nirmatrelvir and ritonavir, stops the virus from replicating, which significantly reduces a person's chances of becoming severely ill.

"Enabling patients to receive Paxlovid is another way pharmacists in this province continue to play a critical role in the fight against COVID-19," said Janice Audeau, community pharmacist and President of the Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Paxlovid 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
- Have not been admitted to hospital; and
- Are considered high risk for hospitalization or death due to COVID-19:
 - Immunocompromised individuals not expected to mount an adequate immune response to SARS-CoV-2 infection, regardless of COVID-19 vaccine status
 - Individuals ≥ 80 years of age, regardless of vaccination status
 - Individuals ≥ 60 years of age, regardless of vaccination status, residing in rural/remote communities, residing in a long-term care setting, or members of the Indigenous community; and,
- Are not contraindicated for treatment with Paxlovid

Important information for individuals who feel they may be eligible for Paxlovid:

- Individuals who feel they are eligible based on the above criteria should call their local pharmacy to arrange an assessment. Individuals must NOT go into a pharmacy if they have COVID-19 symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19 - the assessment can be done over the phone.
- If an individual has COVID-19 symptoms that started within the past five days and has not been hospitalized but does not have access to a PCR or rapid test, the pharmacist can provide a rapid test at no cost for self-administration as part of the assessment process.

"Pharmacists play an important role in the delivery of health care services to residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, and this is another convenient and valuable service they can offer their patients," said Audeau.

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