



Fact Sheet

COVID-19 Treatment for people receiving dialysis: nirmatrelvir-ritonavir (Paxlovid®)

Paxlovid® is an antiviral medicine that stops the COVID-19 virus from multiplying in your body. This reduces the risk of your infection getting worse. It may also help you feel better and stay out of hospital.

Nirmatrelvir-ritonavir (Paxlovid®) does not prevent you from giving COVID-19 to others.






How to take nirmatrelvir-ritonavir (Paxlovid®)

Paxlovid® is made up of two medicines: nirmatrelvir (pink, oval tablet ) and ritonavir (white to off-white, oval tablet ) .

The Paxlovid® pack contains a total of 30 tablets in 5 blister strips (6 tablets per strip). Because of your kidney function, you will **not** need to take all 30 tablets.

Pink and white tablets must be taken together at the same time.

On dialysis days, these doses should be taken after dialysis.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Paxlovid dose	2 pink tablets AND 1 white tablet 	1 pink tablet AND 1 white tablet 	1 pink tablet AND 1 white tablet 	1 pink tablet AND 1 white tablet 	1 pink tablet AND 1 white tablet 
Date					
Day of the week					
Dose taken	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tick the box when you have taken your dose.

NOTE

It is recommended that the dispensing pharmacist modify Paxlovid® package for patients with reduced kidney function such as removing and discarding not needed tablets from each blister. You can forward to your local pharmacist an **additional information sheet “COVID-19 Treatment: nirmatrelvir-ritonavir (Paxlovid®) for people receiving dialysis treatment – Guidance for Dispensing Pharmacists modifying packaging”**. Please discuss with your kidney doctor to obtain the additional information sheet.

Paxlovid® should be taken until the full course is finished, even if you start to feel better before the course has ended.

You can take Paxlovid® with or without food. Where possible, the tablets should be swallowed whole, but they can be crushed if needed.

If you forget a dose of Paxlovid®, take it as soon as you remember. If it is the next day, skip the missed dose and take your next dose at the usual time. Do **not** take a double dose to make up for a missed dose.

What are some common side effects?

All medicines can have side effects. If they occur, side effects are usually minor and temporary.

Some common side effects include headache, vomiting, diarrhoea, high blood pressure, sore muscles, and changes in taste. These should go away after the course finishes.

Some very rare side effects need urgent medical attention. These include swelling of the face or lips, and difficulty breathing. It is important that you call an ambulance on 000 immediately if you experience these symptoms. Speak to your regular doctor if you experience any side effects that worry you, or that are not listed here.

How to store nirmatrelvir-ritonavir (Paxlovid®)

Paxlovid® should be stored in its original packaging and kept below 25°C (room temperature).

If Paxlovid® needs to be re-packed into a dose administration aid (e.g., a Webster-pak®), the tablets should be cut off the blister strip (remaining in their original packaging) before being placed in a dose administration aid. Speak to your pharmacist for more information about this option.

Who should not take nirmatrelvir-ritonavir (Paxlovid®)?

People who are allergic to ritonavir, nirmatrelvir, or any other component of the medicine should not take Paxlovid®. (See section of common side effects)

Your prescribing doctor should speak to your kidney specialist before starting you on Paxlovid®.

DRUG INTERACTIONS: Paxlovid® can interfere with **many** other medicines. This includes herbal medicines bought 'over the counter', and combined hormonal contraceptives (e.g., 'the pill'). If you are taking combined hormonal contraceptives, additional barrier protection is recommended during and for 1 month after Paxlovid® finishes.

It is important that you tell your kidney specialist, doctor, and pharmacist about **all** the medicines you normally take.

Breastfeeding and pregnancy are not recommended during treatment with Paxlovid®. It is important that you tell your health care practitioner if you could be pregnant.

Can I receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

Vaccination is highly recommended, but you may need to wait for at least 90 days after your COVID-19 illness. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist.

Acknowledgement: Health Navigator, NZ – Paxlovid in Advanced chronic kidney disease or dialysis.

For more information

Medicines Information Service
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