

Professional Notice

To: Pharmacy Practitioners
From: The Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists
Date: January 27, 2022
Re: Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) Oral Treatment for COVID-19

With Health Canada approval of the antiviral medication Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) for the treatment of COVID-19, it is critical that all pharmacists understand this new drug and the unique way it will be prescribed and dispensed in Nova Scotia.

Initially, this drug is being prioritized for Nova Scotians who meet specific criteria and will only be available through a controlled distribution model. However, even with limited distribution, this new drug therapy will impact pharmacy practice in all pharmacies in some way.

As experts in drug therapy management, pharmacists must be able to:

- Manage critical drug interactions, both at the time of dispensing or if recognized mid-therapy (regardless of where the medication was dispensed) including:
 - Determining the best action to take, and if discussion with a prescriber is necessary, bringing a specific recommendation forward (rather than asking the prescriber for a solution).
 - Informing relevant prescribers in the patient's circle of care when the management of the drug interaction may impact patient care (e.g., drug therapy change, need for increased monitoring).
 - In instances where Paxlovid™ is not dispensed or is stopped mid-therapy, informing the designated prescriber team at COVIDTreatment@nshealth.ca and, if appropriate, the patient's primary care provider.
- Educate patients, the public, and other healthcare professionals about the unique nature of Paxlovid™.

Nova Scotia Health has asked the NSCP to share their [Nirmatrelvir/ritonavir \(Paxlovid\) Guidance and Direction for Patients](#) with pharmacy practitioners. This guidance document provides information about:

- patient eligibility criteria
- how patients can access the medication
- the significant drug interactions associated with this medication

As noted in this guidance document, the [University of Liverpool COVID-19 Drug Interactions Database](#) is a recommended resource for screening and managing interactions.

Additional educational resources include:

- [Nirmatrelvir/ritonavir \(Paxlovid™\) product monograph](#)
- [PANS Webinar: What You Need To Know About Outpatient COVID-19 Pharmacotherapy](#)
- [PANS Resources for Outpatient COVID-19 Pharmacotherapy](#)