

Important COVID-19 updates

Update to York Region health care professionals as of May 24, 2024

Updated clinical recommendations for antiviral therapy for adults with mild to moderate COVID-19

Ontario Health's [evidence-based guidance](#) considers recently circulating strains of SARS-CoV-2 and pre-existing immunity from prior infection and/or vaccination in Ontario. It includes:

- Updated recommendations for when antiviral therapy is advised and when it can be considered based on a health care professional's clinical judgment
- An updated list of risk factors that are associated with more severe COVID-19 outcomes
- Changes to the COVID-19 severity classification
- An overview of the real-world evidence for antiviral therapies

The following documents are available on the Ontario Health's [COVID-19 treatment](#) webpage:

- [Recommendations for Antiviral Therapy for Adults with Mild to Moderate COVID-19](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions on Antiviral Therapy for Adults with Mild to Moderate COVID-19](#)
- [Access to Antiviral Therapy for COVID-19 in the Community](#)

Funding for nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid) will transition to typical models in May 2024

Since 2022, Paxlovid has been supplied by the federal government as a temporary, extraordinary measure at no cost to patients who met established criteria in Ontario. This procurement has ended and the remaining supply of Paxlovid will **expire** on May 31, 2024.

In March, the Ministry of Health advised pharmacies that this supply should be dispensed only until May 26, 2024 (for the 5-day treatment course). Moving forward, funding options for Paxlovid will change to include selected government drug benefit programs, private insurance, or payment directly by the patient, consistent with typical funding models for other medications.

Consider proactively developing a management plan with high-risk patients to avoid delays in antiviral treatment. For information on how to access antiviral therapy for COVID-19 for patients in the community, including new funding information, refer to [Access Antiviral Therapy for COVID-19 in the Community](#).

Also, Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary information on Paxlovid is available at [Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary/Comparative Drug Index Edition 43](#).

For more information, refer to the OHIP Information bulletin (released May 17, 2024) about [COVID-19 antiviral treatments](#).

Patients or health care professionals can email OPDPinfo@ontario.ca for additional questions about COVID-19 antiviral therapy.

Continued availability of Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs)

To initiate treatment for COVID-19, patients must have tested positive for COVID-19 on either PCR or rapid antigen test (either self- or provider-administered). Health care professionals can continue to order free rapid antigen tests from the Ontario Ministry of Health through the [PPE Supply Portal](#). Please see the Chief Medical Officer of Health's [memo](#) for additional information.

COVID-19 vaccine campaigns

Ontario's Ministry of Health's spring COVID-19 vaccine [campaign](#) for individuals at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 will end in June. Please encourage all eligible individuals to receive an additional dose of the COVID-19 vaccine before the campaign ends.

On May 3, 2024, Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) released [Guidance on the use of COVID-19 vaccines during the fall of 2024](#). York Region Public Health (YRPH) anticipates Ontario's Ministry of Health will announce a similar fall campaign as in 2023 and we will provide an update when more information is available.

Contact Us

If you have any other questions, please call our CID intake line at 1-877-464-9674, ext. 73588.