# HSE Clinical Guidance on Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) for use in the Treatment of COVID-19

This document is intended for use by healthcare professionals only.

This guidance is specific to the management of patients with COVID-19 disease.

While the guidance is intended to strengthen clinical management of these patients it does not replace clinical judgement or specialist consultation.

Issued July 2025 by the Office of the Chief Clinical Officer

**This document replaces the previous version issued in January 2025.**

**The changes relate to recent approval of Paxlovid™ for use in patients with severe renal impairment.**

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) is not recommended for routine use in treatment of COVID-19**
2. **Treatment may be considered for selected seriously immunocompromised COVID-19 patients for the licensed indication.**
3. **Particular care is required in balancing potential risk with evidence based expectation of benefit in relation to patients in the "use with caution" category (see below).**
4. **The following is intended to guide use of Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) in those selected seriously immunocompromised COVID-19 patients in whom Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) is prescribed for the licensed indication.**
5. **Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) should not be used outside of the licensed indication.**

## LICENSED INDICATION FOR USE: [1]

Refer to Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC) of Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) for full prescribing information https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/product-information/paxlovid-epar-product-information_en.pdf[1]

| TREATMENT | INDICATION | ICD10 | PROTOCOL CODE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) | For the treatment of COVID-19 in adults patients (over 18) who:<br>• Are less than or equal to 5 days of symptom onset<br>• COVID-19 confirmed **within the last 5 days**<br>• do not require supplemental oxygen and who are at increased risk of progressing to severe COVID-19 | U07.1 | COVID001 |

## TREATMENT: [1]

| DRUG | TREATMENT |
|---|---|
| Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) | 300mg nirmatrelvir (two 150mg tablets) with 100mg ritonavir (one 100mg tablet) all taken **together** orally every 12 hours for 5 days. |

A dose reduction is recommended in patients with moderate and severe renal impairment.
See SmPC for full information when prescribing in renal impairment.

| Renal function | eGFR (mL/min) | Days of treatment | Dose of nirmatrelvir | Dose of ritonavir | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mild renal impairment or no renal impairment | Greater than or equal to 60 | Days 1-5 | 300 mg (two 150mg tablets) | 100 mg | 12 hourly |
| Moderate renal impairment | Greater than 30 and less than 60 | Days 1-5 | 150 mg (one 150mg tablet) | 100 mg | 12 hourly |
| Severe renal impairment including those requiring haemodialysis | Less than 30 | **Day 1*** | 300 mg (two 150mg tablets) | 100 mg | **ONCE** |
| | | Days 2-5 | 150 mg (one 150mg tablet) | 100 mg | **ONCE DAILY** |

eGFR = estimated glomerular filtration rate

***Note:** A Loading dose is required for patients with severe renal impairment (including those requiring haemodialysis) as the dosing is **ONCE** daily.

**ELIGIBILE PATIENTS:**

Selected seriously immunocompromised patients who meet all criteria outlined in the indication section.

**EXCLUSION CRITERIA:**

Patients who do not meet the eligibility criteria above

**CONTRAINDICATIONS:** [1]

- Severe liver disease- Child Pugh Class C
- Co-administration of medicinal products that are highly dependent on CYP3A for clearance and for which elevated concentrations are associated with serious and/or life threatening reactions.
- Co-administration of medicinal products that are potent CYP3A inducers where significantly reduced Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) plasma concentrations may be associated with potential for loss of virologic response and possible resistance.
- Hypersensitivity to the active substance or to any other ingredients
- Any contraindications to Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) as listed in the Summary of Product Characteristics.

## USE WITH CAUTION: [1]

- In patients with **moderate renal impairment** (eGFR less than or equal to 60mL/min and greater than or equal to 30mL/min), the dose of Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) should be reduced to 150mg/100mg every 12 hours for 5 days.

> **Special attention for patients with moderate renal impairment**
>
> The daily blister contains two separated parts each containing two tablets of nirmatrelvir and one tablet of ritonavir corresponding to the daily administration at the standard dose. Therefore, patients with moderate renal impairment should be provided with only one tablet of nirmatrelvir with the tablet of ritonavir to be taken every 12 hours.

- In patients with **severe renal impairment** (eGFR less than 30 mL/min) including those requiring haemodialysis, the dose of Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) should be reduced to 300mg/100mg **ONCE** on Day 1, and 150mg/100mg **ONCE** daily on Days 2-5.

> **Special attention for patients with severe renal impairment**
>
> The daily blister contains two separated parts each containing two tablets of nirmatrelvir and one tablet of ritonavir corresponding to the daily administration at the standard dose.
>
> Therefore, patients with severe renal impairment should be provided with two tablets of nirmatrelvir with one tablet of ritonavir to be taken once on Day 1, and one tablet of nirmatrelvir and one tablet of ritonavir for administration once daily on Days 2 to 5.
>
> There is a daily blister specific for patients with severe renal impairment that contains two tablets of nirmatrelvir and one tablet of ritonavir for administration once on Day 1, and one tablet of nirmatrelvir and one tablet of ritonavir for administration once daily on Days 2 to 5 *.
>
> **(*Launch date of this pack size in Ireland is not available)**

- Caution is advised in patients with pre-existing liver diseases, liver enzyme abnormalities or hepatitis, due to a risk of hepatotoxicity.
- Ritonavir is a CYP3A inhibitor (and PgP inhibitor). Nirmatrelvir is a substrate of CYP3A. Interactions with other medicinal products could lead to **clinically significant reactions, including potentially life-threatening or fatal reactions, loss of therapeutic effect of** Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir /ritonavir) **and possible development of viral resistance.**
- Carefully review concomitant medicines before and during treatment. Monitor the patient for adverse reactions associated with any concomitant medicine. Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) should not be started immediately after discontinuation of certain contraindicated medicines, see Summary of Product Characteristics for further information.
- The COVID-19 Drug Interactions tool developed by the University of Liverpool (https://www.covid19-druginteractions.org/) should be used to check for potential drug interactions. A mobile app of the Liverpool Covid-19 tool is also available. Further information on medicines contraindicated for concomitant use with Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir) and for potential significant interactions with other medicinal products are also available from the Summary of Product Characteristics[1].
- Ritonavir may reduce the efficacy of combined hormonal contraceptives. Patients using combined hormonal contraceptives should be advised to use an effective alternative contraceptive method or an additional barrier method of contraception during treatment with Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir ritonavir), and until one menstrual cycle after stopping treatment.

## OTHER INFORMATION:

Completion of the full 5-day treatment course is recommended even if the patient develops severe or critical COVID-19 after starting treatment[1].

## Method of Administration:

Oral

## DRUG INTERACTIONS:

Refer to Summary of Product Characteristics

## ATC CODE:

Antivirals for systemic use, protease inhibitors, J05AE30

## REFERENCES:


1. Summary of Product Characteristics Paxlovid 150mg + 100mg film-coated tablets. Available from: https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/product-information/paxlovid-epar-product-information_en.pdf Accessed online: 22.05.2025