

New at-home COVID-19 treatment on its way to Alberta

January 25, 2022

Albertans with mild to moderate COVID-19 symptoms who are at high risk of developing serious disease will soon have a second option for early treatment.

The first shipments of Paxlovid will be available to Albertans starting Jan. 31. Initial supply will be limited, so eligibility will be limited to those who will benefit the most. This medication can cause side effects, so it will be available only by prescription after an assessment by a clinician.

Paxlovid is the first COVID-19 treatment approved by Health Canada that can be taken orally at home and the second COVID-19 early treatment option available in Alberta after Sotrovimab was made available last year.

Treatment with the medication must be started within five days of the onset of symptoms and is intended for use by individuals who have immunosuppressive conditions, are unvaccinated and over the age of 65, or are unvaccinated and over 18 with pre-existing medical conditions that put them at higher risk of severe illness or death.

Eligibility for Paxlovid

Paxlovid is for use in patients who have a confirmed COVID-19 infection, are within five days of experiencing their first symptoms and meet certain medical criteria.

Eligible conditions include:

Individuals who have no contraindications and one of the following immunocompromising conditions, regardless of vaccination status:

- transplant recipients
- oncology patients who have received chemotherapy or other immunosuppressive treatment since December 2020
- inflammatory conditions, such as:
 - rheumatoid arthritis;
 - lupus;

- inflammatory bowel disease;

Individuals who have no contraindications, are unvaccinated and:

- age 65 and older
- age 18 and older with a pre-existing health condition, including:
 - diabetes (taking medication for treatment)
 - obesity (BMI >30)
 - congestive heart failure
 - chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and moderate to severe asthma

Accessing Paxlovid

Albertans who meet the eligibility criteria can call Health Link at 1-844-343-0971.

HealthLink staff will ask screening questions and refer Albertans to a health professional to confirm eligibility and arrange for treatment, if appropriate.

Albertans are asked not to call pharmacies or physician offices directly.

Booking vaccination appointments

Albertans are encouraged to do their part to protect themselves and others from severe outcomes by getting every vaccine dose they are eligible for. Appointments can be booked online with participating pharmacies or AHS by using the Alberta vaccine [booking system](#). Albertans can also call 811, [participating pharmacies](#) or participating physicians' offices.

Related information

- [Book your COVID-19 vaccine appointment](#)

Multimedia

- [Watch the news conference](#)
- [Listen to the news conference](#)

Media inquiries

[Steve Buick](#)

780-288-1735

Senior Press Secretary, Health