

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme listings for COVID-19 treatments

Information for prescribers and pharmacists

Prescriber Bag Supplies

Lagevrio® (molnupiravir) and Paxlovid® (nirmatrelvir and ritonavir) were added to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Prescriber Bag arrangements on 1 November 2022. This came after a recommendation from the [Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee \(PBAC\)](#). This change was made to support prompt treatment of patients at high risk of developing severe disease when it is not possible to obtain supply from a community pharmacy on a PBS prescription in a timely manner.

More information about the Prescriber Bag arrangements and the full list of Prescriber Bag medications is available at [Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme \(PBS\) | Prescriber Bag Supplies](#).

What does this mean for prescribers?

Medical practitioners and nurse practitioners are able to order up to two bottles of Lagevrio (40 capsules per bottle) and two cartons of Paxlovid (30 tablets divided in 5 daily-dose blister cards, per carton) from a community pharmacy.

Prescribers may order the maximum quantity of each medicine provided they do not already have the maximum quantity on hand. The medicines can only be obtained once a month.

When to use Prescriber Bag supplies?

Certain pharmaceutical benefits are provided without charge to prescribers who in turn can supply them free to patients for emergency use. Lagevrio and Paxlovid have been included in the Prescriber Bag supplies for use in urgent circumstances for patients who are at a high risk of developing severe COVID-19 AND who are unable to fill a PBS prescription from a community pharmacy in a timely manner. Examples include:

- A patient in a rural or remote area where the nearest community pharmacy is closed.
- A patient being seen by a medical practitioner in an aged care or disability care facility where there is no possibility of having a PBS prescription filled in a timely manner.

Prescriber Bag supplies are not intended to be used for reason of convenience only. Prescribers and patients should use a PBS prescription whenever possible, including asking their pharmacy to arrange for Lagevrio or Paxlovid to be delivered at home, if necessary.

Risk factors for developing severe COVID-19 include older age, certain medical conditions and being moderately to severely immunocompromised. For further details on risk factors, please see the factsheets at: www.pbs.gov.au/browse/publications.

Lagevrio or Paxlovid should be administered as soon as possible after a diagnosis with COVID-19 and within 5 days of symptoms onset. Please note, that these medicines are not intended for initiation in patients already requiring hospitalisation due to severe or critical COVID-19.

Ensuring stock

The Australian Government ensures all PBS-listed medicines can be supplied quickly to patients, via the Community Service Obligation (CSO) arrangement, with pharmaceutical wholesalers delivering the full range of PBS medicines and National Diabetes Services Scheme products, to patients via their community pharmacy, regardless of where they live and for most items within 24 hours.

Both Lagevrio and Paxlovid must be supplied by CSO Distributors to community pharmacies within 24 hours of order cut-off times, including for distribution to rural and remote locations.

Pharmacists are encouraged to stock these medicines on community pharmacy shelves to ensure patients can commence treatment immediately.