

Kia ora,

COVID-19 antiviral medicines – resources for healthcare providers

Te Whatu Ora - Health New Zealand is working with Manatū Hauora - Ministry of Health, Te Aka Whai Ora - Māori Health Authority, Te Puni Kōkiri - Ministry of Māori Development, and Ministry for Pacific Peoples to raise awareness that free antiviral medicines are available to people who are at risk of getting severely ill from COVID-19. We want eligible people to know about antivirals before they get sick, so they can get the medicines quickly if needed, and that the medicines are available directly through many pharmacies. We're emphasising that people should stay home and isolate if they feel sick, and call their pharmacist or usual healthcare provider for a phone appointment to talk about antivirals.

As our information campaign continues, you may get more questions about antivirals, so we wanted to remind you of key information and provide some useful new resources.

As you'll be aware, antivirals are free for people eligible under [Pharmac's access criteria](#), which was expanded in September and now includes:

- Māori or Pacific people aged 50 years or older
- everyone aged 65 years and older
- anyone aged 50 years or older with **fewer than two** COVID-19 vaccinations
- anyone with a [severely weakened immune system](#)
- anyone with Down syndrome
- anyone with sickle cell disease
- anyone previously in critical or high dependency hospital care from COVID-19
- anyone with **three or more** [high-risk medical conditions](#).

To be eligible, a patient must have COVID-19 and be experiencing symptoms, or be a household contact of someone with COVID-19 and be experiencing symptoms. We recently updated our [clinical guidance on oral therapeutics for the treatment of COVID-19](#), which you can find on the [Te Whatu Ora website](#). The [COVID-19 Health Hub website](#) has information on the criteria and high-risk medical conditions, and is the best place to point the public for Manatū Hauora advice on what to do if you test positive for, or are exposed to, COVID-19.

Pharmacies may get more questions

One of the campaign messages asks people to speak to a local pharmacy about their potential eligibility before becoming unwell, or phone a pharmacy for an assessment if they've tested positive, are having symptoms, and think they may be eligible.

If you're a pharmacy that offers antivirals, we have developed a poster you can display to make people aware. You'll find a link to this in the table on page 2. If you don't offer antivirals, either with or without a prescription, a reminder to please use Healthpoint to identify the nearest pharmacy that does and provide the patient with that pharmacy's information. You may wish to save the following links:

- [Pharmacies that provide antivirals without a prescription](#)
- [Pharmacies that provide antivirals with a prescription](#)

Resources for pharmacies and general practices

We have developed the following resources for you to display, use or share as you see fit – with your patients and the local community.

Note: Most of these resources are available from the Unite Against COVID-19 [online resource toolkit](#). If you've not used this toolkit before, you'll need to register first - it's free and only takes a couple of minutes.

Resources for pharmacies and general practices	Karawhiua resources for Māori audiences	Unite Against COVID-19 resources
<p>Pharmacy posters - these let people know you offer antivirals. Available in A3 and A4 sizes with a variety of images. Download and print.</p> <p>If you are a RAT collection centre, download this flyer to distribute with RATs.</p> <p>General Practice posters - these can be displayed in your practice. Available in A3 and A4 sizes with a variety of images. Download and print.</p> <p>Factsheet – you can provide this to anyone with questions or an interest.</p>	<p>The Karawhiua website has a resources page with antiviral posters, factsheets in te reo Māori and English, and videos. It also has information on antiviral medicines and an antivirals availability map.</p>	<p>The Unite Against COVID-19 website (COVID19.govt.nz) has information on antiviral medicines in 27 languages.</p> <p>The website also has accessible format resources, including Braille, large print, NZSL, audio and easy read.</p>

Thank you for supporting this rollout of COVID-19 antiviral medicines to people in your communities. We will continue to provide updates and resources as this mahi progresses. If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch with the COVID-19 Care in the Community team: COVIDCareintheCommunity@health.govt.nz.

Ngā mihi maioha,

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[TeWhatuOra.govt.nz](https://www.tewhatuora.govt.nz)

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government