

## **Victorian Department of Health COVID-19 medicines - updated guidance**

### **Evusheld™ update by the TGA**

Tixagevimab and cilgavimab (Evusheld™) continues to be available in Victoria for use in high-risk people for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) of COVID-19, with all stock from the National Medical Stockpile (NMS) expiring on 31 December 2022. It is highly unlikely that further stock will be available from the NMS in 2023. Therefore, from January 2023 access will be up to individual hospitals to consider making available with a projected cost per dose of >\$2500.

The Therapeutic Goods Association (TGA) announced revised dosing recommendations for the use of Evusheld™, increasing the standard dose from 300mg to 600mg. Top-up doses for already treated patients is at clinician discretion. Sites can administer double dose for PrEP, however there is no guarantee that NMS stock used will be replaced as there is limited NMS stock available in Victoria.

The TGA has also provided provisional approval for Evusheld™ for treatment of COVID-19 indication (please see attached flyer from AstraZeneca).

Recent pre-print laboratory studies have found Evusheld™ may have reduced effectiveness in protecting against some, but not all, circulating Omicron subvariants (BA.2.75.2, BQ.1, BQ.1.1, XBB, BF.7 and BA.4.6 and possibly XBF). The proportion of COVID-19 infections caused by these subvariants is estimated to be >60% (and increasing) in Victoria based on recent genomic sequencing data.

In the absence of an alternative option for pre-exposure prophylaxis and mix of circulating variants, Evusheld™ continues to be available for use. Clinicians should consider this information in making individual patient management decisions. Patients should also be reminded of additional protective behaviours to prevent infection as well as the importance of early testing and their eligibility for antivirals.

A number of resources have been recently updated and will be available shortly on the department website – these include the consumer factsheet, clinician FAQ and community prescriber guide.

Refer here: <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/vaccines-and-medications-in-patients-with-covid-19> for further information and prescribing resources

### **Paxlovid™ update by the TGA**

On 17 November 2022, the TGA approved a shelf life extension of Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir 150 mg/ritonavir 100 mg), from 18 months to 24 months. The extension may be applied retrospectively to batches manufactured prior to this approval. The storage conditions remain unchanged at 'Store below 25 degrees Celsius'. Please refer to the attached communication from Pfizer.

### **Lagevrio™ update**

Acknowledging the recent updated recommendation by the National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce that Lagevrio™ (molnupiravir) should not be routinely used (and Paxlovid™ is first line), Victorian treatment guidelines have not

changed: <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/covid-19-medications-for-at-risk-people-who-do-not-require-oxygen>

When Paxlovid™ is unsuitable or unavailable, Lagevrio™ is a suitable option, as supported by an [analysis conducted by the Victorian Department of Health](#) of people over 70 diagnosed with COVID-19 from July to September 2022.

This showed that COVID medicines substantially reduced risk of hospitalisation (32% for Paxlovid™, 26% for Lagevrio™) and risk of death (72% for Paxlovid™, 54% for Lagevrio™). Early treatment with a COVID antiviral provided the greatest benefit – treatment with either drug within one day of diagnosis reduced the risk of hospitalisation by 37%, and death by 63%.

- Link: <https://theconversation.com/paxlovid-is-australias-first-line-covid-antiviral-but-lagevrio-also-prevents-severe-disease-in-over-70s-195349>

The Victorian Department of Health's webpage will be updated within this new guidance shortly, in the interim please send any covid medicine queries to [covid+pathways@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:covid+pathways@health.vic.gov.au)

The Victorian COVID-19 therapies PBS prescriber helpline is available for use by Victorian PBS prescribers such as GPs and nurse practitioners. The helpline is staffed 7 days a week between 8 to 5pm and can be contacted on [03 8290 3801](tel:0382903801).