



Use of Tamiflu in residential aged care

9 May 2022

As part of the Department of Health's winter preparedness plan, packs of the prescription-only medication, Tamiflu (oseltamivir), an oral antiviral used to treat and prevent influenza A and B infections, will be deployed to residential aged care facilities (RACF) in a one-off pre-placement.

This stock is being pre-placed to ensure access to supplies at the commencement of this year's flu season. This is not intended to replace standard supply chains used by providers, rather it reduces the impacts of supply shortages within the private market and the delays in shipping that may result from increased demand during the winter period.

RACFs will need to source additional supply through community pharmacies in line with normal arrangements once the pre-placed stock has been expended.

RACFs in Western Australia without permits to hold medications will need to access the pre-placed stock through WA Health. In the event of an influenza outbreak, they should contact their Public Health Unit to request urgent approval to have a deployment of Commonwealth Government stocks.

Nurse practitioners may prescribe medicines as private prescriptions according to their state/territory prescribing accreditation. The medicines which can be prescribed differ between states and territories. Nurse practitioners should check whether they have authority to prescribe Tamiflu under their relevant state or territory medicines and poison legislation.

Responsibilities of approved providers

Prepare residents and families

RACFs are encouraged to pre-assess residents for suitability for Tamiflu and seek resident or family consent ahead of an influenza outbreak and to ensure agreed arrangements with an authorised prescriber for timely provision of prescriptions when needed.

Ensure appropriate storage

RACFs must safely store the medicines when they arrive so they are accessible in an influenza outbreak. Tamiflu must be kept in a secure, cool dry place where the temperature stays below 25 °C.

Monitor residents for symptoms and act

Given the short period of time to act (within 48 hours of symptom onset), RACFs should activate their outbreak management plan, in line with Communicable Diseases Network Australia guidance, when symptoms are first detected, including a clinical assessment, test and treatment pathway.

Safe and effective medication administration

Tamiflu is a Schedule 4 Prescription Only medication. The pre-placed Tamiflu can only be used for residents of aged care facilities following prescription by an authorised prescriber.

Adverse effects

RACFs should monitor residents taking Tamiflu for any adverse effects, the most common being nausea and vomiting, diarrhoea and stomach pain, and report to the TGA as required at <http://www.tga.gov.au/reporting-adverse-events>.

Usage where a resident may also be COVID-19 positive

Testing for flu and COVID-19 is a critical step to determining appropriate treatment and ensuring the right medication is administered in a timely way.

Note that a lab-confirmed positive influenza result is not required to prescribe Tamiflu.

Clinicians should use the approved product information for Tamiflu and any related COVID-19 approved treatments as the source of truth in these circumstances to guide their clinical decision making.

The **HealthDirect Line for residential aged care facilities managing COVID-19** is **1800 131 330** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

Tamiflu for influenza prevention

Public Health Units may recommend Tamiflu as a preventive measure and dosage information can be found in the Tamiflu product information.

Consumer information

Read more about: Influenza www.health.gov.au/health-topics/flu-influenza
Tamiflu www.healthdirect.gov.au/medicines/brand/amt.39602011000036100/tamiflu
COVID-19 oral treatments www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19/treatments/oral
Lagevrio www.nps.org.au/radar/articles/molnupiravir-lagevrio-for-mild-to-moderate-covid-19

RACF staff information

Please contact your local public health authority regarding influenza.