Australian Government
Department of Health and Aged Care

BE COVIDSAFE

Use of Lagevrio (molnupiravir) in residential aged care

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One of the first oral treatments for COVID-19 in Australia, Molnupiravir (trade name Lagevrio®, MSD), was provisionally approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) on 18 January 2022.

Lagevrio (molnupiravir) can be effective in treating people with mild to moderate COVID-19 who are within 5 days of displaying symptoms and who have a high risk of progressing to severe disease.

Working in partnership with the aged care sector, the Australian Government preplaced Lagevrio (molnupiravir) in residential aged care facilities to ensure timely access to the drug before it was listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) on 1 March 2022.

The medication is now also available through community pharmacies.

The drug must be prescribed by an authorised prescriber who has assessed the suitability of this treatment, prior to administration to a resident.

This guide outlines the key considerations of introducing Lagevrio (molnupiravir) into residential aged care clinical practices.

Who is the medicine for?

It is recommended Lagevrio (molnupiravir) be considered for **use in all residents aged 70 years or older**.

Eligibility information for other high-risk groups, including those **aged 50 or older** and **First Nations people aged 30 or older** with two risk factors or **immunocompromised adults** can be found at www.health.gov.au/oral-treatments

Depending on the state or territory where the facility is located, a registered nurse or a carer supervised by a nurse may be able to administer the treatment.

A COVID-19 diagnosis can be confirmed by either a PCR test or a rapid antigen test, preferably administered by a member of the clinical team, therefore not self-administered.

Clinical particulars

Side effects

The most common side effects reported in clinical trials of Lagevrio (molnupiravir) were diarrhoea, nausea, and dizziness. It is recommended that residents receiving Lagevrio be closely monitored for these side effects.

Dose adjustment

No dose adjustment is recommended for elderly people including those with renal or hepatic impairment.

Interactions

No drug interactions have been identified with Lagevrio (molnupiravir).

Swallowing

Do not open, break, or crush the capsules. If the aged care resident cannot swallow capsules whole, please consult the treating doctor.

See the Lagevrio (molnupiravir) PBS product information fact sheet.

See the Fact sheet - Changes to PBS eligibility for COVID-19 treatments - Information for prescribers and pharmacist (July 2022)

Preparation for potential use of this medicine

To facilitate speedy access to treatment, facilities are encouraged to pre-assess any potentially eligible residents, as per the advice above.

Pre-assessment actions should include:

- discussing consent options for potential treatment with the aged care resident and relevant decision-maker
- identifying eligible aged care residents in RACF clinical management systems
- discussing potential medicine administration with the aged care resident's GP, nurse practitioner or facility clinical care staff.

Accessing this treatment

Lagevrio (molnupiravir) is **a prescription only (S4) medicine** which requires a prescription from an authorised prescriber.

Lagevrio was listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) on 1 March 2022 and Paxlovid on the 1 May 2022 which means the medications can be dispensed by a community pharmacy with a prescription.

If an aged care resident is eligible for this treatment, and is experiencing mild to moderate COVID-19, please contact the aged care resident's usual regular treating clinician or health professional to arrange a clinical assessment as soon as possible.

As with other antiviral treatments, such as the treatment for shingles or influenza, this medicine should be started as soon as possible. People aged 70 years or older, regardless of risk factors, can commence treatment with or without symptoms.

Use your usual process to prepare for a GP consultation. Where the aged care resident's usual GP is not available, follow your facility's usual process to source medical support.

Please use any existing supplies on hand in your facility before ordering more medication through a community pharmacy.

If the residential aged care facility is already responding to an active COVID-19 outbreak, a telehealth consultation is a suitable alternative to discussing the commencement of treatment for a resident, if they meet the regulatory requirements (Schedule 4).

Contact your state or territory health department or Chief Pharmacist for more details including any requirements for Schedule 4 substances such as an 'imprest' medication system.

A course of Lagevrio (molnupiravir) is 800 mg (four 200 mg capsules) twice a day (every 12 hours) for 5 days. Lagevrio (molnupiravir) is supplied as a bottle of 40 capsules; it should be stored below 30°C.

Lagevrio (molnupiravir) can be taken with or without food.

Please review the TGA Molnupiravir (Lagevrio) product information and discuss with the resident's treating GP to ensure that this medication is administered safely.

If a resident needs to be transferred to hospital while receiving a course of Lagevrio, send the already started blister pack of medication with them to the hospital (if appropriate).

This should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Adverse events

Please ensure that all possible adverse reactions are reported using the usual existing mechanisms. Anyone can report an adverse event.

To report an event online you will need the following information:

- reporter details
- patient details
- medicine details
- reaction details.

For residents and families/substitute decision makers

Download the fact sheet for residents and families/substitute decision makers on oral treatments.

More information

See the TGA Adverse Event Management System privacy statement.

More information on the updated PBS eligibility criteria and prescribing information