



# How to access treatments for flu & COVID-19

15 July 2022

## A guide for residential aged care facility staff

With winter comes the increased risk of COVID-19 and influenza outbreaks.

Effective treatments are available for residents in residential aged care facilities and should be commenced as soon as possible. For a resident with COVID-19, this should be within 5 days of symptoms onset and for influenza, Tamiflu should commence as soon as possible, but no later than 48 hours after the onset of the initial symptoms of infection.

### How to access Tamiflu

Supplies of Tamiflu were pre-placed in all residential aged care facilities to ensure access to supplies at the commencement of this year's flu season.

RACFs need to source additional supplies through community pharmacies, with a prescription from the resident's doctor, in line with normal arrangements once the pre-placed stock has been expended.

No further supplies will be provided by the National Medical Stockpile.

A negative RAT is not needed to prescribe Tamiflu, nor is a laboratory-confirmed influenza result. Please refer to the [test and treat pathway for influenza in residential aged care facilities](#).

### How to access COVID-19 oral treatments

Lagevrio and Paxlovid are listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) so can be accessed with a prescription from an authorised prescriber e.g. GP or nurse practitioner.

RACFs can access Lagevrio or Paxlovid through community pharmacies with a prescription from the resident's doctor or a nurse practitioner in line with normal arrangements for Schedule 4 medications.

Supplies from the National Medical Stockpile will only be provided in exceptional circumstances where local supply is not available.

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.

## Eligibility & risk factors for COVID-19 oral treatments

From 11 July 2022, the eligibility criteria to access PBS listed oral antiviral treatments for COVID-19 has been expanded.

**People aged over 70 years** no longer need any other risk factor to be eligible.

They also do NOT need to have symptoms to commence treatment following a positive test.

For **people aged over 50** or **First Nations people over 30 years**, risk factors include:

- living in residential aged care
- living with disability with multiple conditions and/or frailty (but not limited to living in supported accommodation)
- neurological conditions like stroke or dementia and demyelinating conditions e.g. multiple sclerosis, Guillain-Barre Syndrome
- chronic respiratory conditions including COPD, moderate or severe asthma
- obesity or diabetes (type I or II requiring medication)
- heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies
- kidney failure or cirrhosis
- living remotely with reduced access to higher level healthcare.

### In an outbreak

In the event of an outbreak, and when a RACF is unable to access supplies of Lagevrio from a local pharmacy, the Department may then facilitate supply through the National Medical Stockpile in exceptional circumstances.

RACFs should contact their Commonwealth case manager for further advice should this situation arise.

## More information for COVID-19 and influenza

[About COVID-19 oral treatments](#)

[About Tamiflu](#)